

The Political Constitution of Islandness:
The 'Tasmanian Problem' and *Ten Days on the Island*

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Declaration

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Andrew Harwood

21st June, 2011

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness. Ever since colonisation by the British in the early years of the nineteenth century, island status has been at the heart of Tasmanian collective life. However, many scholarly and public discourses of Tasmania treat islandness as an inviolate social condition resulting from the seemingly fixed geographical fact of being an island. Tasmania's encircling boundedness, much smaller areal size in comparison to the Australian continent, and modern geographical position at the end-of-the-earth, sustain judgements that Tasmania is isolated and peripheral to national and global affairs and that Tasmanians are insular and backward, recalcitrant moderns.

The social conditions that are taken to flow from islandness are theorised within the scholarly field of island studies as 'the island effect'. However, many conceptualisations of islandness are deeply invested in modern dualism, and view the agency of islands in terms of pre-given, objective ontological opposites, chief among which are mutually exclusive categories of nature and culture. Actor-network theory provides an alternative to monolithic constructions of islandness as an apolitical determinant in social life, presenting islandness as a performative achievement arising from agency borne of heterogeneous entities. Rather than approach islandness as a topographical form, the distinctive spatiality of islands is conceived of as being constituted from three obdurate topological relations: those of land-water, island-continent, and island-island.

The empirical investigation into the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness reported in this study begins with discourse analysis of three twentieth century governmental inquiries into the aetiology of the 'Tasmanian problem'. These inquiries, covering a period of 70 years, propose that Tasmania's island status and distinctive island community are characteristic of Tasmania, but a problem for Tasmanians and, therefore, need to be overcome if Tasmania is to progress. Given the impossibility of overcoming a characteristic which is constituted as an inviolate social fact of nature, these acts of governance are met with repeated resistance and interference from Tasmanians. The uncanny success of the governmental framing of Tasmania as an impossible object of governance is to cement islandness as an authentic, though essentially backward, feature of Tasmanian life.

At the end of the twentieth century governmental ambitions are increasingly organised around appeals to 'culture'. In Tasmania, the history of resistance to governance in the name of society and from the perspective of the nation-state seem to pre-dispose the island to novel forms of governance that work through island culture. A major international cultural festival, *Ten Days on the Island*, intended as a celebration and affirmation of Tasmania's worldly islandness, is the prime site through which to re-articulate solutions to the Tasmanian problem.

This study reports on an empirical investigation of the workings of the first two *Ten Days on the Island* festivals, in 2001 and 2003. In the inaugural festival, a mix of participant observation and ethnographic description prepare the ground for analysis of how the festival re-positioned Tasmania's island status and the identities of Tasmanians. While the first festival was hailed by many as an unparalleled governmental success in its ability to bring Tasmanians together as a member of the world of island cultures, the second festival in 2003 was beset by patterns of acrimony and bitterness long familiar in Tasmanian politics. An environmental controversy erupted in the lead up to the 2003 festival when the State Government business enterprise, Forestry Tasmania, was named as a major sponsor of *Ten Days on the Island*. The governmental dream of uniting Tasmanians as islanders provided new means for reasserting the fractured form of Tasmanian islandness. The multiplicity of peoples, practices and places complicit in the varied constitutions of islandness suggests that governmental projects are destined to invariably fall short of their ambitions. Rather than the Tasmanian problem being a problem of Tasmanians, the source of the problem resides in the dream of governance to fully-encompass Tasmania as an island.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction to a fractured island

Tasmania could well represent the Platonic ideal of an island. Its shape of triangle or heart stands clear, its beauty is rich and varied. Subordinate to the basic outline are a fringe of many islets and a fretting of the coast by peninsulas, bays, and estuaries – all adding their charm and diversity. Island-ness is the central fact in Tasmanian life, affecting economic growth, social attitudes, personal experience.

Michael Roe, *The Heritage of Tasmania* 1981: 1

Introduction

This thesis examines the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness. As the influential Tasmanian historian Michael Roe observes, islandness has long been at the centre of life in Australia's only island-State. Modern scholars have implicated the concept of islandness in the distinctive identity of pre-colonial Aboriginal Tasmanians (Palawa) and in the colonisation of Van Diemen's Land as a British penal settlement at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹ This concept is, however, not only deployed retrospectively to make sense of Tasmania's past. Talk of islandness is to be found at the heart of contemporary political and public discussion about Tasmanian futures.

Scholarly and public discourses of Tasmania commonly represent islandness as an unequivocal social condition resulting from a simple *geographical* fact; from, that is, the objective reality of Tasmania *as* an island. The first of two defining characteristics of an island – land surrounded by water – is understood in these accounts as presenting an isolating physical barrier that renders Tasmania socially insular, distinctive and homogenous. The second defining characteristic of an island – smallness in relation to continental scale – is understood in these accounts as rendering Tasmania a 'trinket' of little social consequence in the life of the Australian continent-nation.² These characteristics

¹See, for example, the works of historians such as Stephen Alomes (1973, 1976, 1981), Henry Reynolds (1963, 1969a, 1969b, 1969c, 1971), Lloyd Robson (1972, 1978, 1985, 1988) and Michael Roe (1986, 1988, 1989).

²A federal system of government, the Australian Commonwealth (1901) is composed of six founding states (New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia), three self-governing territories (Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and Norfolk Island), and a mix of other jurisdictions administered by the Commonwealth (including the external Australian Antarctic Territory).

work with Tasmania's location to the south of Australia, at the bottom of the modern world, to support claims that Tasmania necessarily occupies the margins of global economic, cultural and social flows.

The apparent stability, objectivity and coherence of physically pre-given island status have invited recurrent attempts to anchor the shifting sands of Tasmanian life in the apparent fixity of nature. Many have imagined Tasmanian society to reflect an unchanging essence of place. Its apparent isolation and marginality have variously been constructed as opportunity and obstacle. But whether presented as a premium site for a prison or an inefficient location for industrialisation, the facts of isolation and marginality have been rarely opened to public and political scrutiny as a reality that could be, indeed, is, otherwise. The present study, then, seeks to contribute to such scrutiny by offering a critique of the socio-political effects that have flowed from dominant geographical imaginaries of Tasmanian islandness during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. My aim in this study is not to deny the influence of island status in Tasmanian life, but to argue that this influence is multiple, contested and dynamic. Post-colonial Tasmania juxtaposes a variety of forms of island status – including a variety of pasts, presents and futures – that generate diverse socio-political effects. As a geographer, I seek to be attentive to the ways in which social agency works in and through the physical materiality of the world – being simultaneously transformed and transformative – while resisting the presumption that place determines human experience in any singular, essential way. As a Tasmanian, I am motivated by my love of Tasmania and by my awareness that the place I care for is only one of many Tasmanias that exist around me and that are cherished by Tasmanians. I elaborate on the personal motivation that animates this study below, providing a brief narrative account drawn from my experience of Tasmania's islandness. The remainder of this introduction then presents the research agenda that guides the study and sketches out the theoretical and empirical dimensions of my investigation of the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness.

Tasmania as island, islands of Tasmania

The farmhouse in which I grew up sits atop a hill from which the surrounding countryside unfolds. In the far distance to the south can be seen the rocky outcrops of Mount Roland

and Black Bluff. Northward a horizontal expanse of ocean extends, seemingly upwards, to meet the sky. Here, at the tiny town of Forth in the north of Tasmania, the coast curves northwards, west and east, and the line where sea touches sky is bound on either side by green pastures, tilled red-basalt fields and eucalypt-forested hills. The mass of water caught by these horizons has the appearance of an enormous vertical oceanic 'wall', shimmering brilliant ultramarine in the sun, or growing dark grey from storm winds that churn the water into turbulence. The proximity of Bass Strait, a 240km stretch of shallow-sea between the northern coast of Tasmania and the southern coast of Victoria, is an ever-present reminder of the island's separation from continental Australia.

Fishing trips from out of the mouth of the Forth River brought Bass Strait closer, lowering the horizon and dissolving the vertical wall of water, giving rise to the sense that the sea encircling our boat made possible movement in all directions. Out in Bass Strait, we were visited by seabirds and porpoises, and, occasionally, by seals or a lone albatross: the latter we revered, and fed with fish. The sea's distinctive smell and changes in temperature hinted at how much life the water held, and how good the fishing might be. On the lee side of the boat, waiting for a fish to bite, I could trace the line into the depths, peering through the water column to observe jellyfish pulsating. Seasonal masses of squid intercepted our fishing rigs as they sank, giving the appearance of a false sea-floor. Once, in the shallows, I looked down to see a large wobbegong shark, its patterned spots and bands framed against the surrounding reef. Out on the water I could look back towards the land, as much as anything in an attempt to ward off sea-sickness by fixing upon a solid mass. From the sea, the shoreline of northern Tasmania runs as far as the eye can travel, with indentations marking the many rivers that flow from the island's mountainous central plateau. From the vantage point provided by a small open boat, bobbing on an ocean swell, rocked by waves, and drifting with the wind, Tasmania wasn't small at all.³

³ The area of the main island of Tasmania is approximately 65,000km², only slightly smaller than Ireland, making it the 26th largest island in the world, counting Greenland as the largest island (2.13 million km²), and Antarctica (13 million km²) and Australia (7.6 million km²) as continents.

I was taught in primary school that Tasmania was an island⁴ from the *Jacaranda Junior World Atlas* (Honour, 1971) (Figures 1-1 and 1-2), ‘prepared especially for Tasmanian Schools’.



Figure 1-1 Australia and the ‘island-State’ of Tasmania
Jacaranda Junior World Atlas (Honour, 1971: 45)

⁴ In fact, unlike the many islands that make up the *State* of Tasmania, the main island of Tasmania has no proper name. Perhaps the much larger island should be called the indigenous Trowenna or the colonial Van Diemen’s Land?



Figure 1-2 Tasmania and Bass Strait
Jacaranda Junior World Atlas (Honour, 1971: 52)

However, my earliest experiences of Tasmanian islandness revealed a multiplicity of islands. Indeed, my first memorable encounter with land completely surrounded by sea was not Tasmania itself, but of miniscule Goat Island (Figure 1-3), one of the many offshore islands that complicate the coast of Tasmania.



Figure 1-3 Goat Island viewed from the Tasmanian mainland
Photo: Ferraby Ling (2010)

Goat Island, on Tasmania's northern coast, is replete with seaweed strewn rock pools, hidden caves that front the sea, two 'mountain peaks' that face each other, and a vegetated valley, providing many of the spaces characteristic of islands found in children's adventure stories. At low tide, the island is revealed to be joined to mainland Tasmania by an extensive wave-cut platform. As a child I walked to Goat Island, jumping from rock to rock and wading in water no more than knee deep. But at high tide, with the sea whipped into frenzy by storm scuds making their way from west to east across Bass Strait, the island transforms, becoming solitary and outcast from the safety of the mainland.

Goat Island's transitory islandness, at once enclosed and permeable, helped me make sense of repeated acts of leaving and returning to Tasmania, an ambivalent experience first stirred by childhood aeroplane flights across Bass Strait to visit relatives on mainland Australia. From aeroplane windows, the coastline of the island matches the lines drawn on maps, the force of waves, winds and swells diminish to nothing, and the sea is knitted into endlessly repeating swathes of coloured-in blue. I could trace our flight-path from Devonport (Tasmania) to Melbourne (Victoria) on the brochure provided in the aeroplane seat-pocket. From Melbourne, many more black lines linked Australia's coastal cities

together in a network that criss-crossed the continent, some lines extending to the edges of the map, shooting off in unknown directions.

My experiences of Tasmania's islandness juxtapose perspectives from land, sea and sky and are contingent and partial, embodied in materialities that hold together, without uniting, liquid and solid forms, large and small islands, and islands and mainlands. My curiosity in and respect for the complex social condition of islandness is borne of the diverse representations, practices and encounters enabled by living within and through these associations. The scholarly investigation of the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness reported upon in this thesis is animated by these relations. At the same time, this investigation has acted recursively upon many of my own prior understandings and preconceptions, throwing public imaginaries and my own private imaginaries of Tasmania open and each into the other.

The political constitution of islandness

For James Ritchie (1977: 192, 193) "islanders orient to and in terms of land, sea, and themselves": "maybe not every islander points his or her back to a mountain. But every islander has a mental map of the island as a palpable reality". My own experience is that islandness is neither as fixed in physical *geographies* as many might think, nor is the physical fact of islandness itself as invariant as is often assumed. The lifeworlds of islanders are variegated and varied, as are islands themselves. The portion of Tasmania across which no flight paths are marked on airline maps, faces the Southern Ocean and the frozen continent of Antarctica. Peter Conrad (2009: 7) likens this part of Tasmania to "a body torn apart, the peninsulas south of Hobart trail off into arms, then tenuous fingers. Before long, the fragmentary limbs and digits crumble into flailing ocean". Yet, in dominant representations of Tasmanian islandness, these serrations and variegations are rendered imperceptible; so too the many smaller offshore islands and 'internal island' communities of Tasmania. Tasmania is embodied as a single primary organ, a cordiform or heart-shaped landmass defined by its firm liquid edge. In this simplified and resonant form, Tasmania appears as an organic unity well suited to the tasks of fostering social unity and aligning personal and collective identities with the apparently stable coherence of

island essence. Framed as the result of a fixture of nature, islandness has often lent itself to political projects that seek authority by containing, ordering and erasing difference.

The political constitution of Tasmanian islandness as a singular entity today answers to, but is not beholden to, well-established historical patterns explored in this study under the banner of the 'Tasmanian problem'. For Tasmania's island status has long been presented by state and federal governments as a 'problem' for Tasmania and Tasmanians. While "many Tasmanians are conscious of an identity born of geographical separation from the mainland and of a history peculiar to the island state" (Townesley, 1976: 1), Tasmanian identity is routinely framed as beset by parochialism, insularity and backwardness. The island's perceived suite of economic, demographic, political and social 'disabilities' are routinely tied to a problematic Tasmanian identity, the effect of which it to position Tasmania as lagging behind the modern world in its pursuit of progress and development.

In describing the enactments and lively agencies of geographical categories, such as islandness, within governmental projects, this thesis explores strategies for affirming both geographical and political multiplicities, and for understanding the interaction of those multiplicities. The varied performances of islandness that constitute Tasmania are choreographed by relations that involve a wide variety of materials, peoples and practices. In arguing for Tasmanian multiplicity, I suggest that an appreciation of this diversity *recasts* the 'Tasmanian problem', not as a problem that lies with recalcitrant Tasmanians, but as a problem in and of *governance*: a problem created by governing forces in the very governmental acts directed at solving this problem. Indeed, attempts to contain, order and control Tasmania as a coherent and cohesive singularity are destined to be forever disrupted by the overflowing archipelago of Tasmanian places and identities.

Synopsis

In challenging dominant uses of geographical categories as fixed a-social entities, as facts that work on societies in predictable and universally recognisable ways, I here attempt a synthesis of theoretical and empirical strategies found in post-structural cultural geography, actor-network theory and critiques of governmentality. These scholarly endeavours are well-subscribed but have not often been brought into productive contact.

In Chapter 2, I argue that the field of island studies provides a space in which these endeavours may overlap and interact so as to sensitise analysis of the social condition of islandness to particularity and contingency. Introducing the origins and emerging form of island studies, I undertake a critical analysis of explanations of ‘the island effect’ – that is, the influence of island geography in island life – within this field. Identifying ways in which many accounts of the island effect are limited by a modernist ontology, I propose an approach to conceiving of the contingent and contextual conditions of island effects informed by actor-network theory that resists *a priori* assumptions about agency that would reduce it to discrete agents. I recast the agency of islandness as a relational achievement of diverse entities gathered together in a variety of ways in a diversity of geo-historical settings. The point of this analysis is not that islandness belongs to a chaotic plurality that defies rigorous study. Rather, I seek to show how highly specific forms of islandness come to develop powerful political agency that is available for, and that indeed demands, theoretical and empirical critique. Chapter 2 sets the basis for just such a critique of Tasmanian islandness by following the shift within cultural geography and actor network theory from a topographical, or Euclidian, to a topological, or relational, spatial register. The spatiality of islands is argued to be constituted topologically through three relatively obdurate and reciprocal ontological relations: those of land-water, island-continent, and island-island. These relations are elaborated in terms of their diverse configurations within the scholarship of island studies before serving as a means of telling two brief stories of Tasmanian islandness: indigenous Trowenna and colonial Van Diemen’s Land.

The subsequent four substantive chapters of the thesis move out from theoretical concerns with islandness towards a series of empirical investigations into the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness. Chapter 3 sets out a discourse analysis of three economic and administrative governmental inquiries into the ‘Tasmanian problem’. Spanning 70 years of the twentieth century, these inquiries display the obdurate appraisal by government that Tasmania’s problem is that it is an ‘island community’. Literature on governmentality is employed to articulate the empirical investigation of these inquiries in terms of modes of ordering implicit within attempts at constituting governmental objects. I conclude that, in Tasmania, islandness and island community are framed by government, paradoxically, as

inescapably characteristic of Tasmania and as what needs to be overcome in order to solve the Tasmanian problem.

Chapter 4 begins with the *realpolitik* of Tasmania at the turn of the twenty-first century to disclose an intensive governmental effort to mobilise islandness as a resource for solving the Tasmanian problem. Twentieth century assessments of Tasmania's disabilities identified social isolation, backwardness and inhibition as characteristic to Tasmania and problematical for it, thus construing islandness as a resistance to governance. In contrast, governmental programmes emerging around the turn of the twenty-first century, while aligning in general terms with prior constructions of the Tasmanian problem, sought to work through and with Tasmanian islandness. This new found confidence in the ability of government to pursue social opportunity through, rather than in spite of, a fixed and pre-given spatiality is shown to be linked to a wider governmental turn in post-industrialising societies towards 'culture' as a set of social means, a governing technology, for realising political ends. Chapter 4 concludes by showing how confidence in culture as a solution to the Tasmanian problem leads to the creation of a biennial international cultural festival, *Ten Days on the Island*.

In Chapter 5, via a mix of ethnographic and participant observation field work, I provide a detailed description of the assemblages of art, place and people performed in the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island* festival. I show how the governmental ambitions behind the 2001 festival were manifest in concerted attempts to refigure Tasmanian relations to mainland Australia, to other island cultures and communities around the world, and to the surrounding sea that both contributed to Tasmanian distinctiveness and that enabled fluid connections to be established in an increasingly fluid world. An analysis of the festival's key features demonstrates how culture was imagined by organisers to be corralled and then directed towards solving the Tasmanian problem through cultural interventions into place and people by re-configuring Tasmanian islandness.

The first *Ten Days on the Island* was regarded as a far-reaching success by the Tasmanian arts sector and by the festival's government architects and industry sponsors. The second festival in 2003, however, was viewed by many to be a resounding failure. Well before the

opening event, the festival was embroiled in controversy about sponsorship by Forestry Tasmania, a State Government business enterprise involved in harvesting native forests, a practice bitterly contested by a range of Tasmanian environmentalist organisations since the mid-1980s. Many Tasmanian artists withdrew from the festival in protest and an alternative arts event was organised. In Chapter 6, I use primary research material derived from 22 in-depth interviews with key participants involved in this controversy to investigate the transformation of the festival from an implicit vehicle for government ambition into an explicit focus for political struggle organised around different accounts of island identity and island place in Tasmania.

Chapter 7 draws together the findings arising from this mixed methods approach. I suggest that a form of cartographic writing popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the *isolario* or 'island book', provides a model for a synthetic understanding of the *Ten Days of the Island* festival as a compendium of different and co-existing Tasmanian topologies. I argue that the festival can usefully be understood as a monad, in the sense of being a refracted part containing the whole, of the Tasmanian *isolario* more generally and that this understanding supports political projects which seek to work with, rather than against, the multiplicity of Tasmanian islandness.

Chapter 2 - The islandness of islands: discourse and spatiality

Clouds, oceans and land masses gleam in the wan light; the Earth appears to the observer as a cosy island in a universe unfriendly to life, holding all the continents, seas and living species. For the environmental movement the picture's message was plain: it revealed the earth in its finitude.

Wolfgang Sachs, *Globalisation and Sustainability* 2000: 3.

Introduction

The first photographs of the Earth that emerged from the Apollo space missions in the 1960s had a profound effect on geographical imaginings (Cosgrove, 2003). Viewed from outer space, the Earth appears as a mesmerising blue and green planet swirling with white clouds, a lonely 'spaceship' framed against an infinite celestial darkness (Figure 2-1).



Figure 2-1 Earth rise from Apollo 8
Photo: Bill Anders (NASA, 2010)

In these images the Earth is both fragile and wondrous to behold; “the only exuberant thing in this part of the cosmos” (Thomas, cited in Lovelock, 1988: preface). NASA astrophysicist James Lovelock envisioned the Earth so revealed as ‘Gaia’, alive and complete with its own dynamic and agency. As Sachs (2000) notes, this cosmological vision placed ecological processes at the forefront of experience and had the radical effect of de-centring human subjectivity and dwarfing human agency. Meantime, the figure of an Earth floating in space resonated deeply with inherited understandings of islands as ‘complete worlds’.

Narratives of the Earth as an island rely on the long-standing significance of islands as primal geographical entities whose encircling boundary manifests qualities of unity and coherence. By comparison, few other spatial bodies could so readily be thought of as an encompassing whole. The correspondence is clear between the twentieth century image of the Earth from space and the bird’s-eye perspective of sixteenth century cartography (Hillis, 1994). In both cases, the abstract viewpoint from ‘nowhere’ is associated with a de-centring of the self, along with a concomitant pointing-back to the singularity of the viewing subject and the particular organisation of a world that allows such an apparently disembodied vision. The frame of thinking that parallels ‘Earth in the universe’ with ‘island in the sea’ also restored the idea of island to prominence in late twentieth century scholarship and culture.

A centuries-long lineage of writings has established islands as setting, subject and object for social inquiry. This rich and variegated literature provides a matrix out of which the recently formed field of island studies has been crystallised. The defining feature of island studies, an abiding interest in the possibility of ‘the island effect’, arises out of a keenly-felt intuition that island geography has a profound and direct influence on local social life. However, many – though by no means all – accounts of ‘the island effect’ within island studies are caught within modernist ontological categories. Dissatisfied, in particular, with how the framing of the island effect within island studies is reliant on a separation between nature and culture (sustained by modern disciplinary divisions between the humanities and the sciences), I advance an alternative approach derived from actor-network theory, whereby there is no *a priori* assumption about the explanatory power of what it is that is

acting. Island effect is too easily read deterministically as the effect an island's physical form has upon the island's culture, history, social and political life. The island effect is 'constructed' but often it is taken as actually produced by the island, almost as if it were a distinctive causality of that island. Yet it is still necessary to distinguish what is peculiar about islands, which is not tied up in the topographical material entity to the exclusion of other actors, but incorporates a potentially inexhaustible repertoire of social and discursive entities. Hence, I use the term islandness to avoid the implication of direct causality in the idea of 'the island effect', and note that a plethora of entities – physical, social and discursive (and who know what else) – construct and re-construct islandness.

In this thesis, islandness is conceived topologically (Serres, 1995a), as an ongoing relational dynamic, involving "complexes of space and time, matter and process," (Connor, 2002b: n.p.) rather than being constituted solely by topographical forms (Murdoch, 2006). The island is recognised as existing spatially, according to geographical relations, and as an ontological hybrid, morphing through assemblages of the heterogeneous entities by which it is composed. I suggest that the problematic causality of the island effect could be overcome by examining the particular constitution of islandness through the empirical features of any particular controversy within which islands 'make a difference'.

The geographical status of islands is one starting point for unpacking islandness. In this chapter, I begin by examining the writings of island studies to identify what are taken to be specific about islands, noting that these qualities and attributes are, in Michel Serres' (cited in Salisbury, 2006: 41) inimitable words, "multiple in space and mobile in time, unstable and fluctuating like a flame". Islandness emerges from myriad local fluxes, and "is not easily defined. It takes as many different forms as there are islands" (Gillis and Lowenthal, 2007: iii). Islands are inherently paradoxical entities that seem destined to evade categorical definition; however the constitution of islands within island studies exhibits relatively obdurate patterns. Principally, three relations are central to islandness: those of land and water, island and continent, and island and other islands. These relations recur throughout accounts of islands, although "the specificity of the relations themselves necessarily varies from case to case and can only be determined locally" (Webb, 2003: 228). An examination of the spatiality peculiar to islands as geographical entities is important, because, as John

Law (2002: 103) has contended, “spaces are made together with objects”. One implication of the co-construction of objects and spaces is that island spatiality is inherently political, both in terms of what sort of entities are (and are not) brought together in the constitution of islands, and also in the sense that enactments of islandness bring different, and often contradictory, types of spatiality into existence. The politics implicit within the natural, textual and collective construction of islands is at the heart of this thesis, a central contention of the topological approach required to analyse Tasmanian islandness.

In the second half of this chapter I analyse the meanings associated with island, towards an understanding of island spatiality. In the final section of the chapter I introduce Tasmania as an island by working the topological relations of islandness through two proper names of Tasmania, indigenous ‘Trowenna’ and colonial ‘Van Diemen’s Land’. Subsequent chapters investigate historical and contemporary political constitutions of ‘Tasmania’ as an island.

(1) Discourse

[T]hat magic word ‘island’ (Royle, 1999: 1).

Island lineage

As with other archetypal landscapes, including forests, mountains, rivers, deserts and oceans (Schama, 1996), islands hold an interest for those who fall under their charm that seems inexhaustible and profound. A vast and diverse literature bears witness to the enduring ‘fascination of islands’ (Baum, 1997); what Lawrence Durrell (1953) calls ‘islomania’. Not only do islands abound – “there are hundreds and thousands ... in every sea and ocean” (Royle, 2001: 1) – writings about islands are equally plentiful and their imagery of island is protean and contradictory.

John Gillis holds that islands “are among the features of the landscape that are indispensable to Western thought processes” and, *a fortiori*, “Western culture not only thinks about islands, but thinks with them” (2004: 1). Although the notion of distinctively ‘Western thought processes’ seems difficult to sustain given the diversity of peoples and

places to which the term 'Western' might refer,⁵ Gillis's contention that islands have a central and critically formative position within distinct geographical imaginaries is a novel claim (see also Arnold, 2000; Gillis, 2003; Hall, 2001; Olwig, 2007; Tuan, 1974, 1995). Indeed, other writers have been interested in exploring the notion that the "romance of islands has been part of Western literature since its origins" (Van Duzer, 2006: 143). Thurston Clarke (2001: 9) has gone further than identifying a 'Western' obsession with islands, contending that islomania is integral to the human condition itself, stemming from a religious imperative in the human imagination towards holism "that transcends cultures and centuries". In his view, only this passion could account for

why Chinese mythology places heaven on an archipelago of rocky islands, Greek and Roman heroes inhabit the Islands of the Blessed, Christians built some of their holiest churches and monasteries on islands, and the reedy islets of Lake Titicaca ... sacred to the Incas ... are still revered by their descendants (Clarke 2001: 9).

Mythical islands (Figure 2-2) or islands that through repeated representation have become mythic, continue to serve as otherworldly and "secret places, where the imagination never rests" (Fowles, 1998: 289).

⁵ The notion of peculiarly 'Western' knowledge is problematic in that it both assumes an *a priori* unity and, as identified by various feminist (for example, Harding, 1993) and post-colonial theorists (for example, Said, 1994), tends to "systematically marginalise individuals and other existing knowledges" (Roberts and Mackenzie, 2006: 158).



Figure 2-2 'Secret' island
(van Swaaij and Klare, 2000:17)

The imaginative possibilities of islands is apparent from Homer's *Odyssey*, Plato's *Atlantis* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, More's *Utopia*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Wells' *Island of Doctor Moreau*, or Huxley's *Island*; or think about islands most recently represented in the oxymoronically titled reality television shows *Survivor* and *Shipwrecked*. The imaginative and allegorical possibilities for islands are also seen in William Golding's (1954) *Lord of the Flies*, which built on the tradition of island utopias but diverted the current of 'Robinsonia' that flowed in the wake of Defoe's classic to a dystopian orientation (see Gallardo-Torrano, 2000; Sargent, 2006; Schaer *et al.*, 2000 for utopian currents). The trajectory continued in J.G. Ballard's novel *Concrete Island* (1973) – about a motorist 'shipwrecked' on an elevated traffic island in the midst of London's

isolating and alienating flows of automobiles – which underscored the contradictory possibilities of the island theme.

In our time, island retreats are advertised to tourists as a release from the anxiety and stress of urban life in an increasingly globalised world (Connell, 1993, 2003a; Goss, 1993). Travel brochures are replete with vistas of tropical paradise, distilled into a quintessential mixture of azure seas, radiant sun and pure white sand, and promising an exotic island escape from the ‘real’ world. Ironically, just as the wealthy seek out tropical islands as places of escape from hectic modern lives, those same hectic modern lives also directly threaten to wipe tropical islands off the map. Islands now also feature prominently in media discussion of climate change as uniquely fragile and vulnerable, with their cultures, ecosystems and economies at the whim of larger and mostly indifferent powers (Campling and Rosalie, 2006; Connell, 2003b; Farbotko, 2005). In the lead-up to the 2009 climate change talks in Copenhagen, for example, the news media’s characterisation of islands as ‘at risk’ was capitalised on by the government of the Maldives who held a parliamentary cabinet meeting underwater, to highlight their susceptibility to rising sea levels.

In the long lineage of islandness, islands are rich entities, replete with multiple associations, including some that are contradictory, ambivalent or paradoxical (Baldacchino, 2006a, 2007c; Peckham, 2003). Islands offer both exile and refuge, one person’s island-paradise being another’s island-prison. The literature embraces cannibal islands as well as Arcadian island paradises. It includes islands that are configured as remarkably complete – such as More’s ‘perfect’ island republic of *Utopia* – and islands that are internally fragmented – Britain’s three realms of England, Scotland and Wales are a notable historical example and contemporary exemplars include Cyprus, Sri Lanka and Ireland (Steinberg, 2005). Islands have provided a prototypical setting for children’s adventure stories (Hebley, 1998; Loxley, 1990; Saxby, 2002), well-known British examples being Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island* (1857), Ransome’s *Swallows and Amazons* (1932) and Blyton’s numerous books in which a group of children explore an ‘island of adventure’. In these works the island offers a place separate from the world of adults, yet within which ‘adulthood’ can be experimented with and obtained.

In a globalised world characterised by the contemporary tendency to “emphasise the dominance and penetration of connectivity and seamlessness” (Atkinson, 2009: 299), islands have assumed the role of powerful counter spaces or ‘heterotopias’ (Foucault, 1986) characterised by isolation, insularity and difference (Kahn, 1995; Deloughrey, 2001). Objecting to this familiar association of islands surrounded by water with the characteristics of isolation and insularity, Epeli Hau’ofa (1994, 1998) has argued that the sea connects as well as separates, and serves as a highway as well as a barrier. Hau’ofa’s now famous inversion of the image of Oceania – from the belittling ‘islands in a sea’ to the vital and dynamic ‘sea of islands’ – points to a difference between islander and outsider perspectives even while it underscores the classic theme of islands as “paradoxically separate and yet fluidly connected” (Bedggood, 2004: n.p.). Hau’ofa’s argument has been that whereas ‘continentals’ have perceived the Pacific Ocean as a vast region of undifferentiated space dotted with “isolated and impoverished scraps of land”, ‘islanders’ have “understood themselves as living amid numerous watery pathways to adventure, trade, enemies, and friends” (Wood, H. 2003a: 360).⁶

The over-worked, still-working tropes in the lineage of island include utopia, prison, home, exotic refuge, paradise, cannibal island, remote ‘castaway’ islands and islands as stopovers for sea traffic. An expanded though incomplete list would also include the island as entrepôt, laboratory, nuclear test site, plantation, microcosm, cul-de-sac, sacred precinct, rich person’s possession, tax haven, ethnographic museum or anachronistic curiosity and threshold. Contradictions in the understanding of island are also seen in deep-seated grammatical formulations. In many European (Latin-derived) languages ‘island’ is gendered as feminine (Holm, 2000; Péron, 2003; Teng, 2005; Williamson, 1994), and the islandness of island identity is identified by Peter Gill (1994: 282) as “more or less exclusively a male prerogative”.

Charles Darwin ([1859] 1985) and Alfred Wallace ([1881] 1998), most famously, and Bill Holm (2000) recently, figured islands as unique repositories of eccentricities and oddities, in contrast to a view of islands as the last refuges of practices that have died out on the

⁶ For a discussion of some of the complexities surrounding negotiations of ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ ontologies and epistemologies, see Houston Wood’s (2003) survey of cultural studies scholarship in Oceania.

‘mainland’. The desert island of marooned and empty solitude, beloved by cartoonists and signified by the presence of a single coconut palm, upon investigation carries distinct spatial attributes within its ambit, places such as a cave, hilltop, forest thicket, lagoon, swamp, and a singular footprint on the sand (Woods, 1995; Carter, 1996). Thus, there exists a remarkable archive of geographical, anthropological, literary, philosophical and speculative writings of and about islands. This long lineage of island literature has entered island studies as an intuition of ‘islandness’.

Island studies

Like the literature of islands, the professional and academic analysis of islands is equally diverse and varied. Perhaps reflecting these multiple threads Huei-Min Tsai and Eric Clark (2003: 187) note that “island studies do not constitute a uniform, harmonious set of intellectual endeavours free from tensions and incommensurabilities”. While island studies is nominally located within the disciplinary field of geography,⁷ disciplines such as economics, politics, archaeology, ecology, and sociology bring their own research concerns, questions and methods to the field. Evolutionary biology (biogeography) and social anthropology grew from certain exemplary studies of islands (Agnew, 2003; Baldacchino, 2004a, 2004b; Beer, G. 1998; Biagini, 1999; Bonanno *et al.*, 1990; Dodds and Royle, 2003; Eriksen, 1993; Evans, 1973). For Emilio Biagini (1999: 31) ecological studies of islands by Darwin and Wallace in the nineteenth century underpin claims that “insular endemisms” form the bedrock “upon which the foundations of modern biology are laid”. Bronisław Malinowski’s ([1922] 1961) study of the Trobriand Island archipelago off the eastern coast of Papua New Guinea not only introduced the research technique of immersive participant observation into anthropology, it also presented island life as a world in miniature that could only be known as a totality by the contradictory position of the ethnographer at remove from the complex intricacies described. In both evolutionary biology and anthropology the island provides a powerful ‘natural laboratory’ that is both particular

⁷ Russell King (1993: 15) has noted that “there is a rich vein of literature on the geographical significance of islands in the early twentieth century writings of French geographers like Paul Vidal de la Blache and Jean Brunhes, continued later by the great French geo-historian Fernand Braudel”. Also, more recently, island studies has been predominately located within geography, for example Tim Bayliss-Smith *et al.* (1988: 280) asked: “What relevance has academic geography for the study of islands? And what relevance can island studies have to the wider (or perhaps narrower) field of academic geography?”

and abstract, seemingly offering a microcosm of the full spectrum of ecological/cultural interactions that can be known, and therefore generalised to other settings.

As noted, the origins of island studies are diverse, hence difficult to pin down. Godfrey Baldacchino (2007b: 7) observes that “it is difficult to assign even a tentative date to the origins of island studies scholarship, cutting as it does across disciplinary boundaries”. Island studies grew out of the convergence of a number of disparate research fronts, including development studies, area studies, Commonwealth studies, tourism studies and the study of small or micro states (Clarke and Payne, 1987a; Dommen and Hein, 1985). In the 1970s, geographers argued for the inclusion in UNESCO of “Island Ecosystems as a project in the Man and the Biosphere Program” (Bayliss-Smith *et al.*, 1988: 282). During the initial development of island studies in the 1970s, the category of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) dominated discourse. Islands were theorised mainly in terms of the possibilities for island governments to achieve socio-economic development, an orientation that reflected the growing number of sovereign SIDS then in the process of achieving independence. The policy-driven literature of the period tended to frame islands negatively, as subject to the workings of “a structurally unequal international political economy” (Campling and Rosalie, 2006: 117). Capitalist relations were applied across diverse societies, so that marginal and peripheral islands were positioned as economically ‘dependent’ on ‘core’ continental countries. Through the 1980s, the emphasis shifted to issues of geo-political security. In that discourse the isolation, remoteness (Gillis, 2001) and geographical location of strategically placed islands re-positioned them as critical to the ambitions of continental powers (Clarke and Payne, 1987b).

The first ‘Islands of the World’ conference was held in 1986 on Vancouver Island, Canada, and island academics have since met biennially. The *International Small Islands Study Association* (ISISA) was established in 1994 with the directive to ‘study islands on their own terms’, the same year as a United Nations Global Conference on the ‘Sustainable Development of Small Island States’ was held in Bridgetown, Barbados. In 1998, Spain hosted an ‘International Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Small Island Developing States and Other Islands’. Developments since then include the study of SIDS within the

ambit of the United Nations, and the Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI) that pursues work on the cultural specificity of islands.

In the 1990s, the cultural and social aspects of island life received more attention, however the “primary conceptual focus” (Campling and Rosalie, 2006: 117) of research remained the economic and ecological vulnerability of islands (for example, Briguglio, 1995): islands were “identified as being particularly fragile in both an economic and environmental sense” (Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008: 26). During the 1990s, both the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United Nations developed separate ‘vulnerability indexes’ for SIDS that sought to arithmetically account for such island ‘disabilities’ as diseconomies of scale, limited resources, narrow economic base, isolation, small populations and limited domestic markets (Read, 2001). A counter notion of island ‘resilience’, often invested in the distinctive qualities and attributes of island cultures, emerged (Campbell, 2009; Encontre, 1999). UNESCO, for example, contended that islands are “resilient, because, despite obstacles due to their small size, isolation, and exposure to natural disasters ... traditional island societies have managed, for millennia, a healthy equilibrium with their environment and its resources” (Coles, 2004: 32). More recently the Canada Research Chair in Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island was established, two interdisciplinary academic journals (*Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures* and *Island Studies Journal*) specifically devoted to islands were launched, and a growing number of monographs have ‘islandness’ as their central concern (for example, Baldacchino, 2007a; Edmond and Smith, 2003a; Gillis, 2004; Royle, 2001; Young, 1999).

In Tasmania over the last ten years the disciplinary knowledge of island studies has gained a firm foothold, especially in geography, but also in the fine arts, literature, architecture, and even nursing. This increased academic attention on islandness has been reflected in governmental interest in understanding Tasmania as an island. In 2000 David Milne, an island academic from Prince Edward Island in Canada, was brought to Tasmania to speak to government and business representatives on the economic possibilities for island sub-national jurisdictions (see Milne, 2000). In 2003 a special issue of the journal *Local Environment* was devoted to Tasmania as island (Stratford, 2003; see also Bradshaw and Williams, 2000). In 2005, a “21st century communication project” was launched, seeking to

bring together “students, educators and artists to explore and celebrate what it is to live on an island” (TDOTI, 2005: 10). In 2007, a special educational resource for Tasmanian schools, ‘Webbing the Islands’, was developed through a partnership between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Department of Education. The Chair in Island Studies from the University of Prince Edward Island, Godfrey Baldacchino, visited Tasmania during 2007, taking part in *Island (In)sight*, a public discussion that broached the question of “just what makes islands tick” (TDOTI, 2007: 30). The idea of understanding Tasmania as an island and through the concept of islandness has been re-surfacing in Tasmanian public, governmental and academic life.

The islanding of island studies

Gillis’ claim that islands are ‘good to think with’ may be used as a way to understand how tensions commonly ascribed to islands recur in the field of island studies itself. First, the boundedness of land by sea, taken by many writers as crucial to any spatial definition of an island, is repeated in disciplinary-bounded treatments of islands. For example, there are special journal issues⁸ and monographs devoted to island *tourism* (Briguglio *et al.*, 1996; Conlin and Baum, 1995a; King, 1997; Lockhart and Drakakis-Smith, 1997), island *development, finance and economy* (Baldacchino and Greenwood, 1998; Biagini and Hoyle, 1999; Bowe *et al.*, 1998; Lockhart *et al.*, 1993; Worrell, 1987), island *administration and governance* (Baker, 1992; Baldacchino *et al.*, 2009), island *migration* (Connell and King, 1999), island *literature* (Brinklow *et al.*, 2000; Deloughrey, 2007), island *archaeology* (Constantakopoulou, 2007) and island *security* (Clarke and Payne, 1987a). Hence, one tension in island scholarship is between the island as a particular topic of inquiry within established fields of scholarship and the possibility that islands can also provide a means of linking together diverse research agendas.

Second, the distinction made between islands and continents, which is also a critical feature of islandness, is often used to distinguish between the players in island studies: scholars are differentiated into “island dwellers and continentals” (Edmond and Smith, 2003a: i),

⁸ For example, see special journal issues dedicated to islands in *Social Identities* 8 (2) 2002; *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Social Geografie* 95 (3) 2004; *Human Ecology* 25 (3) 1997; *Geografiska Annaler* 87 (4) B 2005; *Sustainable Development* 14 (2) 2006.

which is routinely transposed to the categories of insiders and outsiders (Nunn, 2004; McCall, 1996; Ritchie, 1977; Wood, H. 2003).⁹ This assessment is even extended beyond the status of authorship (questions of *who* can speak of and about islands) to characterise islander or continental 'styles of thought' (Mannheim, [1929] 1960), raising questions about the epistemological and methodological implications of studying islands that cross-cut traditional enactments of disciplinary boundaries (Baldacchino, 2008a).

A third instance of the islanding of island studies is the use of the trope of island to express an allegiance to a particular, favourite and much-loved island – often in opposition to abstract and thematic accounts of islands in general. 'St Helena wins again', the concluding chapter in Stephen Royle's *A Geography of Islands* (2001), is counterpoised to the preceding thematic chapters on island migration, economics, politics, history, communications and tourism. Tensions between the idiosyncrasies of *an* island and the generalised abstract form of islands replicate the strain between the particular and the universal in the way island knowledge is structured and approached. A similar tension is observable in works that extend an archipelago from a few islands, for example Anthony Cohen's (1977, 1978, 1987) writings on Whalsay in the Shetland Islands and Greg Denning's (1980) study of the Marquesas Islands, to larger island regions, such as the Caribbean (Benítez-Rojo, 1992) and Mediterranean (Bradford, [1971] 2000; Horden and Purcell, 2000; Patton, 1996), or to entire oceans, such as the Pacific (Sahlins, 1985), Indian (Pearson, 2003) and Atlantic (Gillis, 2004).

'The island effect' in island studies

At the heart of the many different types of writing about islands is a concern with the relationship between the qualities and characteristics of an island and what takes place within an island's ambit. Implicitly or explicitly, islands raise questions about the role of space, place and geography in the composition of human (and nonhuman) worlds. One useful way of distinguishing the field of island studies from island writings in general is to ask how explicitly a particular piece of work examines this relationship. In some writings the island is merely a convenient setting for a story. In others, the island is an active

⁹ At an island studies conference at Prince Edward Island in 2002 one keynote speaker visibly enacted this division by asking attendees to raise their hands if they were from islands, implicitly questioning the status of 'continental' knowledge of islands.

participant in the drama of human and non-human life, and possesses 'agency' on its own account. David Weale (1992: 92-3) reflects upon his son's relationship to Prince Edward Island in Canada:

That is usually what happens when you live on the Island for long, and is always what happens when you live here as a child. You take it inside—deep inside. First you inhabit the Island, then the Island inhabits you, and you live it from the inside out. Islandness becomes a part of your being, as deep as marrow and as unself-conscious as body language. You begin with an Island name, but in the end you have Island blood. Wherever you look in the world you discover peoples whose lives have been shaped by their habitat. There are mountain people, valley people, and people of the prairie; polar people, coastal people and people of the forest. In each case the nature of the society, its mythology, its imagination, its very spirit, has been sculptured and coloured by its natural environment. It is that way here. The people who live in this province – most of us at least – are island people, and when we say, 'We are Islanders', it is simply an acknowledgement that we have taken the Island inside, and that we have an island psyche, an island soul.

Weale's assessment of an 'island soul' is one instance of the frequent claims in island studies about an 'island effect' on human life. Many island scholars perceive a necessary relationship between island spatiality and island society. Various island effects are associated with different methodologies put forward in island studies, among them apparently benign effects such as setting a story upon an island, conducting research upon an island (the island as natural laboratory) and, with increasing complexity, accounting for island qualities such as insularity and isolation. Within the field of island studies the effects understood as stemming from islands are often contradictory. Robert Faris (1999: ii; see also Anckar, 1996, 2002; Srebrnik, 2004) claims that "island nations are ... more democratic than continental countries", while John Agnew (2000) argues that islands are associated with parochialism, corruption and despotism.¹⁰ Those living on an island are said to have a fixed 'island mentality or psyche', an 'island mind' (Ritchie, 1977). Sardinian island society, according to Luciano Cau (1999: 331), "remains essentially introspective, not inclined to

¹⁰ See Peter Larmour (2008) for a recent discussion, and rejection, of accusations that Pacific Island cultures are typified by 'corruption'.

accept innovations that might change its own pace and way of life". Yet contrary claims are also made for islands as a driving force for innovation. David Pitt (1980: 1055) highlights islander creativity, hypothesising that "island people ... have a nomadic dynamism in their lifestyles and life structures". Following on from the work of Robert McArthur and Edward Wilson ([1967] 2001), Andrew Berry (2007: 168; see also Berry, 2002) discerned "aspects common to all islands that result in shared evolutionary forces on islands the world over". Sir Guy Green (2003) has used the traditional wisdom that 'necessity is the mother of invention' to argue that the isolation associated with islands results in increased rates of technological innovation. Baldacchino and Milne (2000a; 2000b; 2006, 2008; see also Baldacchino, 2000, 2002, 2005b) have investigated and catalogued the innovative political and jurisdictional experiments that islands facilitate.

There are many competing claims about the causal nature of islandness, but it seems well worth asking whether such an effect actually exists? On what basis is the island effect or islandness assumed to work? Has islandness been conceptualised as a universal attribute of an islands' 'nature', or is it thought to be an inherent property of 'social' experience, or of some mix of the two? And how has islandness been discerned by researchers? In short, what mix of ontological, epistemological and methodological commitments and assumptions underpin the many scholarly accounts of islandness?

With these questions in mind, what is of interest, controversial, or at stake in the mythological, literary and scholarly writings about islands is how they facilitate a reflection upon the relationships between the geographical status of islands and the sorts of things that happen or are imagined to happen there. Either the ontological, epistemological and methodological means for conceiving this relationship is contested or (more often) the actual means by which islandness operates remains implied. To the extent that islandness is addressed, the conceptualisation often takes the shape of conventional scholarly binaries between the 'natural' and the 'cultural' world, between the 'physical' and the 'social' sciences, and between 'real' and 'metaphorical' islands. For example, in reporting that the "effects of islands on human behaviour has been largely disregarded, whereas effects of man on islands have been the object of more extensive studies", Biagini (1999:35) remarks that the causality should run both ways. Baldacchino (2004d: 100) questions a well-

rehearsed assessment that the social sciences should emulate the biological sciences by claiming that

since Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace stumbled upon the Theory of Evolution after visiting the Galapagos and Aru Islands respectively, the 'island effect' in biology has been well established. But what of the 'island effect' in social science? Whether 'islandness' is a relevant intervening variable in human affairs remains hotly debated.

For Baldacchino that question was answered in the affirmative: "islandness is an intervening variable that does not determine, but contours and conditions physical and social events in distinct, and distinctly relevant, ways" (Baldacchino, 2004b: 278). Tsai and Clark (2003: 187) emphasised that the knowledge associated with island studies could be organised in terms of "nature-nature interactions" "society-society interactions" and "nature-society interactions". Summarising, in the early 1980s, a range of "symposia, conferences, and volumes on 'small states' and 'island states'," Barry Shaw (1982: 95) put forward both epistemological and political arguments to suggest that

many characteristics commonly ascribed to island states result from their smallness rather than their islandness. The suggestion that island states ... are somehow unique may be based more on an intuitive spillover from the biological sciences or from political considerations arising from their rapid increase in numbers in recent years.

And Pete Hay (2006: 21) recently resuscitated a debate surrounding the usefulness of a distinction between 'real' and 'metaphorical' islands when he wrote:

In fact, within island studies, the very question of the island as metaphor is problematic. Is 'islandness' to do with a generalisable condition of physical isolation or a state of personal disconnection (a robust and tenaciously familiar metaphor and literary trope)? Or is it to do with the stuff of real geographical entities that more or less accord with one of those contested definitions of an island as a physical reality?

Typically, conceptualisations of an island effect are framed by the disciplinary and ontological divisions that operate more generally in epistemological debates around knowledge production. As already noted, significant contours or 'faultlines' (Hay, 2006) of this discourse are shaped by an ontological dualism that asserts the absolute

distinctiveness of the physical geography of an island and human affairs, even while ‘the island effect’ or ‘islandness’ seeks to capture some sense of their interrelation. The discourse therefore raises broader questions about the role afforded to ‘master’ concepts, such as the modern dualisms between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ and between ‘political’ and ‘scientific’ senses of representation, within geographical analysis. Conceptualisations of the island effect go to the heart of classic geographical questions where

it is not merely human identity that is tied to place or locality, but the very possibility of being the sort of creature that can engage with a world (and, more particularly, with the objects and events within it), that can think about that world, and that can find itself in the world (Malpas, 1999: 8).

Geography and actor-network theory

The giddy ‘twists’ and ‘turns’ that have transformed the social sciences over the last three decades have had a variety of impacts on how islandness has been conceptualised. For example, post-colonial writings on islands, many of which propose that insularity is a production of discourse (Balasopoulos, 2008), have been pivotal to rethinking the place of islands within colonial formations (Bongie, 1998; Casid, 2003; Deloughrey, 2001, 2004, 2007; Edmond and Smith, 2003b; Hatzenberger, 2003; Loxley, 1990). Reverberating amongst the linguistic, semiotic, post-structuralist, psychoanalytic, feminist, cultural, postmodern, reflexive and post-Marxist ‘turns’ have been calls for a renewed appraisal of the significance of space and place in social, political, economic and cultural analysis. Neil Smith and Cindi Katz (1993: 67) have noted that the “language of social and cultural investigations is increasingly suffused with spatial concepts in a way that would have been unimaginable two decades ago”. According to Nigel Thrift (2006: 139),

the ‘spatial turn’ has proved to be a move of extraordinary consequence because it questions categories like ‘material’, ‘life’ and ‘intelligence’ through an emphasis on the unrelenting materiality of a world where there are no pre-existing objects. Rather, all kinds of hybrids are being continually recast by processes of circulation within and between particular spaces.

What is notable about Thrift's account of the spatial turn is the reworking of 'materiality' that has accompanied a reinvestment of place and space in the social sciences (Bennett, 2004; Braun, 2006a). The link between the spatial and the material is most productively approached through another 'turn': that associated with the 'social studies of science' or 'science and technology studies'. Of particular interest are the productive relations that have developed between geography and writings ascribed to actor-network theory. These works put question to the ontological categories of nature and culture, and the political and scientific moments of representation that typically frame the island effect within island studies.

Actor-network theory is one part of a more general cross- and inter-disciplinary formation that might, for convenience, be called 'science studies'.¹¹ Actor-network theory had its beginnings in ethnographic 'laboratory studies' of 'science in action' (Latour, 1983, 1987a; Latour and Woolgar, 1979). These studies represented a general dissatisfaction with the account of scientific knowledge provided by classical sociology, especially Robert Merton's (1973) 'normative' stance, and the epistemological and methodological explanations of philosophers of science, for example, Karl Popper's emphasis on falsification in science (1959; 1963). By studying the machinations of techno-sciences in the process of formation rather than as facts waiting to be discovered, actor-network theory opened the 'black-box' of science and technology to discover rich empirical stories of 'things' (Bijker and Law, 1992; Daston, 2000). Actor-network theory was thus radically at odds with narratives that reified the established epistemologies and methodologies of science or explained science according to the existing repertoire of critical sociological concepts (for example, 'class', 'values' and 'interests').

¹¹ Science studies have numerous inter-related and co-constitutive fields based upon complex methodological, epistemological and ontological allegiances. One distinct lineage is the 'sociology of scientific knowledge', another is 'science and technology studies'. Antecedents are as difficult to identify as island studies, but significant figures in the science studies lineage include Ludwik Fleck ([1935] 1979), Karl Mannheim (1952), Thomas Kuhn (1962) and Paul Feyerabend (1975). Bruno Latour (2005) has recently pointed to the roots of actor-network theory in the work of Gabriel de Tarde's proto 'sociology' and Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology. The diverse writings of Michel Serres (1995a) have also been influential, especially in the development of the notion of the 'actor-network', broadly assimilable to "Serres's intensely topological mode of thinking" (Connor, 2002b: n.p.).

Actor-network theory has expanded greatly since a raft of papers by Michael Callon (1986, 1987, 1991), John Law (1986a, 1986b, 1986c) and Bruno Latour (1983, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1998c, 1988d) first appeared in the 1980s and early-1990s. Notwithstanding Latour's unsuccessful attempt in the late-1990s to 'kill off' actor-network theory¹² – on the grounds that it was in danger of freezing into the formalism it had sought to oppose – Latour (2005) recently penned an 'introductory' monograph on the theory in which perhaps unwittingly he showed the extent to which actor-network theory is now part-and-parcel of numerous disciplinary 'tool kits'.

The writings and works that might fall under the rubric of actor-network theory are now highly diverse; I do not seek to provide a comprehensive account of actor-network theory in this thesis, but rather draw upon a select group of resources that have much to offer to analysis of islands. At present, such an engagement between actor-network theory and island studies scholarship is limited; though see Beth Greenhough (2006) and Marion Hercock (2003) for notable exceptions. Actor-network theory can aid the study of islands specifically through its placing of a radically relational concept of materiality at the centre of its inquiry (Castree, 2003). A relational materialism specifies the extent to which diverse human and nonhuman entities achieve their status as actors as an effect of their position within a network of other heterogeneous entities. An entity's ability to 'act', to have agency, is not given in the thing itself as an essence, but rather is an outcome of the different associations of texts, machines, instruments, bodies or institutions that form part of an 'actor-network'. Insofar as actor-network theory is a 'sociology of associations' (Latour, 2005) the spatial formation of 'actor-networks' is central to its account, especially insofar as an analysis of spatiality seeks to understand the relations amongst myriad heterogeneous entities. An actor-network account of islands suggests that the workings of islandness cannot be read straight from the physical geography of an island or the social habits of islanders or the semiotics of island discourses; rather islandness needs to be investigated as a simultaneously material, discursive and collective effect.

¹² Latour (1997: 1) notoriously declared that there were four things wrong "with actor-network theory: the word actor, the word network, the word theory and the hyphen!"

As a discipline long motivated to elucidate the relations amongst humans, non-humans and environments and with its feet in both the humanities and the sciences, geography was predisposed to respond to actor-network theory's re-figuring of these relations. A strong empiricist tradition and the discipline's emphasis on working through specific and contingent 'case studies', rather than seeking out 'general laws', also positioned geography to respond favourably to actor-network's rejection of the explanatory power of macro concepts (Latour, 1987b, 1988a). Jonathon Murdoch (1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2001, 2006) has been prominent in synthesising concepts and ideas derived from actor-network theory in geographical analysis, as have Nick Bingham (1996, 2006; Bingham and Thrift, 2000), Sarah Whatmore (1997, 2002), and Trevor Barnes (1998, 2001), among many others. More pointedly, the geographical interest in actor-network theory goes back to an initial accusation levelled at the discipline by Latour (1997: n.p.) that geography was unduly dominant in the discourse relating to the description of the complex associations of humans and nonhumans.

The difficulty we have in defining all associations in terms of networks is due to the prevalence of geography. It seems obvious that we can oppose proximity and connections. However, geographical proximity is the result of a science, geography, of a profession, geographers, of a practice, mapping system, measuring, triangulating. Their definition of proximity and distance is useless for ANT – or it should be included as one type of connection, one type of network. ... All definitions in terms of surface and territory come from our reading of maps drawn and filled in by geographers. Out of geographers and geography, 'in-between' their own networks, there is no such thing as proximity or a distance which would not be defined by connectibility. The geographical notion is simply another connection to a grid defining a metrics and a scale ... The notion of network helps us to lift the tyranny of geographers in defining space and offers us a notion which is neither social nor 'real' space, but associations.

Latour (and others) sought to develop a language to describe associations that were not simply reducible to the geographical, although by this time the discourse of geography was no longer so fixed within the parameters of either 'social' or 'real' space.¹³ Additionally, the

¹³ Some geographers were at the forefront of existing currents of post-structural thought within the social sciences. Critical here were geographers, such as Edward Soja (1989, 1996) and David Harvey (1989, 1996), that

‘infra-language’ Latour (1987b, 1988a) was most enamoured and inspired by was derived from the writings of Serres (1995a). Serres’ rich vocabulary seems particularly geographical, especially in the emphasis given to *prepositions* (1994, 1995b): small words – such as ‘along’, ‘in’, ‘between’, ‘amid’, ‘next to’, ‘behind’ or ‘in front of’ – that do a lot of work in identifying *relations* between, amongst and around various entities (Connor, 2008). Since Latour’s accusation, there have been many works that incorporate the insights of actor-network theory within post-structural geography.

Reconceptualising ‘the island effect’

With the combined insights of actor-network theory and renewed geographical interest in spatiality, islandness can be reconceptualised as the working of complex assemblages and heterogeneous inter-twinings of specific human and nonhuman actors. As an entity that manages to do certain things in conjunction with other entities, the island is one participant in the relations that attend it. I am interested in the island as both ‘network’ and ‘actor’; as an entity that is ontologically impure or hybrid, one “simultaneously real, like nature, collective, like society, and narrated, like discourse” (Latour, 1993: 6).

I seek here to examine the associations of the different materials and relations that hold an island together by tracing the course of their associations with a range of other phenomena. This approach recasts the question of ‘the island effect’ or ‘islandness’ that is often so difficult to formulate. Conceptualising islands as active participants in practices of ‘assembling the social’ (Latour, 2005), rather than as the raw substratum or pre-given template for the social, has the advantage of focusing attention squarely on the question of islandness by examining the agency ‘afforded’ to any island assembly. Again, agency is understood as a relational effect of the empirical circumstances within which islands are composed and form a part. Because these assemblages involve the *construction* and *performance* of island involving human and nonhuman entities, they are what Andrew Pickering (1995) referred to as open-ended and contingent ‘mangles of practice’ (see

engaged with the work of Henri Lefebvre. Although Lefebvre ([1974] 1991) was trained as a philosopher and held a chair in sociology, diverse mobilisations of his ‘spatial architectonics’ have seen him claimed by geographers. Lefebvre formulated a three-dimensional spatial architectonics – of ‘spatial practice’, ‘representational space’ and ‘representations of space’ – that moved away from Euclidean and metrical (measurable) space. In one example closely related to island studies, Philip Steinberg (2001) used Lefebvre’s triadic-model of spatiality to theorise the ‘social construction of the ocean’.

Pickering and Guzik, 2008). As such, the question of an island effect is moved away from geographical determinism and essentialism, and recast in terms of empirical assemblages whereby agency is a contingent achievement (Marcus and Saka, 2006; Phillips, 2006).

In this thesis the agency of island is an empirical question that is approached without recourse to 'nature', 'culture' or 'society' operating as an "ontological bottom line" (Hinchcliffe, 1996: 664). Likewise, the modernist division manifest between scientific and political representations of island are approached as many much smaller inter-twinings (Latour, 1999). The "complex becoming and multiple determinations" (Venn, 2006: 107) associated with opening up the ontology of Tasmania's islandness does not obviate the possibility of identifying relatively obdurate assemblages of islandness. As Law (1994: 97) noted, a "commitment to contingency doesn't stand in the way of a search for powerful ordering patterns". The emphasis Law gave to *ordering*, rather than order, was doubly important because it sought to work within, rather than directly against, the reliance on dualism Latour (1990a, 1993) had identified as definitive of the 'modern'. For Latour (1990a; 1993; 2004a), modernity is characterised by purifying distinctions between nature and culture and between political and epistemological ('scientific') versions of representation. Dualism "may be a poor solution, but it provides 99 per cent of the social sciences' critical repertoire, and nothing would have disturbed its blissful asymmetry if science studies had not upset the applecart" (Latour, 1993: 54). However, Law (1994: 138) argued that to

turn away from dualism doesn't mean that we should ignore the ordering strains *towards* dualism built into the modern project. Instead, we should seek to treat dualism as a social *project*, a sociological topic, rather than treating it as a resource.

The re-conceptualisation of islandness undertaken in this thesis also seeks to provide a means to empirically investigate how distinctions *are* drawn between nature and culture and between political and epistemological types of representation that are bound up with island. In a sense, there is a double interest to investigate both the moments and movements towards ontological and representational purification, and the simultaneous creation of heterogeneous assemblages (what Latour called 'hybrids') that take place within the performances of Tasmanian islandness. Insofar as the figure of island itself

discloses contingent orderings these are approached topologically. Topology is a mathematical proposition that posits a set of invariant properties or continuities that remain stable while other properties are fluid (Casati and Varzi, 1999). The relations of islandness that constitute the topology of island consist of the relations of 'water-land', 'island-continent and 'island- island'. These relations are presented in detail later in this chapter.

A note on research methods

One of the central research propositions of actor-network theory, which stems from a commitment to avoid *a priori* assumptions about what is assembled in any actor-network, is to 'follow the actors' implicated in any attempt at ordering (Ruming, 2009). In accordance with that methodological directive I have attempted to follow the human and 'other' actors in a long-standing controversy known as the 'Tasmanian problem'. To that end I have used a number of broadly familiar sociological and geographical research methods, including conducting a close discourse analysis of governmental inquiries, identifying an empirical case study, and engaging as a participant-observer/ethnographer in events pertaining to the study, as well as interviewing key players and analysing the popular, academic and scholarly literature on the subject of islands, governance, and the 'Tasmanian problem'. These research methods are well-established in the social sciences and do not require detailed explication here. Notwithstanding the intense interest there has been to develop novel research methodologies to match shifts in theory, the stance offered by actor-network theory foregrounds the use of eclectic *methods* as suited to the 'messy' nature of social inquiry (Law, 2004a, 2004b), rather than a *methodological* guarantee for the status of the knowledge generated. Indeed, this thesis does not propose any novel insights into the process or means of social or geographical research *per se*. A variety of different research methods have been employed to be able "to describe, to be attentive to the concrete state of affairs, to find the uniquely adequate account of a given situation" (Latour, 2005: 144). The empirical details of particular methods, and their relation to the narrative of the thesis, are undertaken at relevant junctures.

(2) Spatiality

What is an island?

Faced with the question, 'what is an island?', most scholars despair at the complications involved in answering it. Royle (1989, 2001) has consistently maintained that a geographical understanding of islands is required. Michael Conlin and Tom Baum (1995b: 4) show surprise at the present lack of definition offered by island studies scholars: "An analysis of island tourism must inevitably begin with a discussion of what constitutes an island. Surprisingly, geographers do not dwell much on this question". John O'Carroll (1998: 265) observes that "for all the discussion of particular islands (and the often repeated observation that Westerners are obsessed with them), we gain only a limited sense of what it is about island-ness as place that so preoccupies our myth-makers". Holm (2000: 3) challenges the necessity of the question: "An island is whatever we call an island. Or whatever I call an island". Louis Brigand points out that "there are almost as many definitions as there are islands" (cited in Coles, 2004: 31). Biagini (1999: 17) parries the question, "if anything can be learned from a study on islands, from any viewpoint, it is the need to beware of hasty generalisations", while Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (2003b: 5) note that islands "are the most graspable and the most slippery of subjects".

In seeking to describe the acquisition of an 'island identity', Weale (1992) implicitly evokes the idea of an island as a distinct environment by asserting that all peoples owe their kind of existence to the particular habitats and natural environments within which they live. Hay (2006) advances a program for the phenomenological understanding of islands, lamenting that the resources offered by literature of place (and in particular the field of eco-criticism) have tended to be under-utilised by island studies. To Biagini (1999: 17) the task of "providing an overview of the physical geography of islands" was 'daunting', both for the "sheer size of the topic" and "the ambiguity of the very concept of island".

By and large, there is general agreement within island studies about the need to provide a conceptual account of the sort of spatial entity an island might be, as a necessary first step to understanding the myriad possibilities implicated in an island's attributes and qualities. Notwithstanding the perceived complications, island studies contain numerous attempts at

articulating what might be geographically generic to and peculiar about islands. In part these reflect the creative development of a field still in formation. By such acts of definition, new disciplines seek to establish themselves amongst related academic fields. According to empirical work conducted by science studies scholars (for example, O'Connell, 1993), the construction of an object of analysis is an invariable first stage in the invention, stabilisation and maintenance of systems, devices and discourses for the measurement, definition and apprehension of that object. This foundational phase in scholarship, of defining what is to be measured and the art and science of measurement (metrology), has been critical to the construction of knowledge. Latour (1990b) coined the term 'immutable mobiles' to describe

objects capable of fixing pieces of knowledge and allowing that knowledge to move and be used well beyond its place of origin. Immutable mobiles ... allow actor-networks to travel and establish relationships of the same form and type as at the point from which they came. ... for it [an immutable mobile] to perform its work of translation it needs to stabilise a whole world of relationships around it (Latham, 2002: 135).

It is possible to discern the lineaments of an 'immutable mobile' in the patterns of similarity and difference that occur in the accounts of island's spatiality in the field of island studies. Constructions of islands are regarded as co-constitutive of island spatiality, and in turn, as constitutive of the field of island studies. Islands are discussed, compared and contrasted, made culturally, geographically, historically and politically specific while – to make such comparison possible – certain qualities are universalised and generalised. Islands are set in motion and made to circulate through varied island assemblages, being modified and transformed in the process. Simultaneously, in order for knowledge to travel among these various islands, a relatively stabilised set of orientations is agreed upon. As such, the work that goes into theorising the 'island' as subject/object of study is critical to the development of the field for it provides the lines of movement along which island studies will travel from island to island. What follows, therefore, is a provisional account of island spatiality as detailed in the field of island studies. It is necessarily abstract in that it attempts to discern patterns amongst the movements and performances of islands. It is, however, coextensive with introducing some of the material issues, debates and agendas dominating island scholarship. This elucidation of the spatiality of island should go some way to

advancing the metrology of island. The relational accounts of islands that it supports also underpin the empirical investigation of Tasmanian islandness undertaken in this study.

In light of the aforementioned re-conceptualisation of islandness as a performative achievement of associations, what constitutes spatiality also requires revisiting before these accounts of island can be presented in detail. I use the notion of ‘topological relations’ to discern what might be peculiar about the spatiality of islands. The work on space and place developing out of actor-network theory, and the discussion of the conditions of spatiality within the discipline of geography more generally (especially in its post-structural turn), focus attention on the associations, attributes and features of islands that are ‘bound up’ with the interactions through and between relations. Law (2002: 91) has contended that “objects are an effect of stable arrays or networks of relations. The suggestion is that objects hold together so long as those relations also hold together and do not change their shape”. I take Law’s observation to highlight the importance of what remains relatively obdurate in academic and popular accounts of islands. In this spirit then, I examine, like Edmond and Smith (2003b: 5), “the status of the island as a figure for figuration itself”.

In the figuration of ‘island’, relations are initially grasped as geographical, which might more accurately be seen as ‘topological’ in their encompassing of the discursive and the collective. In Serres’ (1995a: 60) sense of topology:

If you take a handkerchief and spread it out in order to iron it, you can see in it certain fixed distances and proximities. If you sketch a circle in one area, you can mark out nearby points and measure far-off distances. Then you take the same handkerchief and crumple it, by putting it in your pocket. Two distant points suddenly are close, even superimposed. If further, you tear it in certain places, two points that were close can become very distant. This science of nearness and rifts is called topology, while the science of stable and well-defined distances is called metrical geometry. Classical time is related to geometry, having nothing to do with space ... but with metrics. On the contrary, take your inspiration from topology, and perhaps you will discover the rigidity of those proximities and distances you consider arbitrary. And their simplicity, in the literal sense of the word pli [fold]: it’s simply the difference between topology (the handkerchief is folded, crumpled, shredded) and geometry (the same fabric is ironed out flat).

While Serres is here referring to temporality (Ma, 2000), a number of commentators have noted the scope his 'method' allows for a more generalised 'topological' analysis and, in particular, the implications for spatiality (Brown, 2002, 2005; Connor, 2002b; Latham, 2002; Law, 1999; Mol and Law, 1994). As a mathematical science, topology refers to the properties of entities that remain invariant through transformations in size and/or shape. According to Steven Connor (2002b: n.p.):

Topology may be defined as the study of the spatial properties of an object that remain invariant under homeomorphic deformation, which is to say, broadly, actions of stretching, squeezing, or folding, but not tearing or breaking. Topology is not concerned with exact measurement, which is the domain of geometry, whether Euclidian or non-Euclidean, but rather with spatial relations, such as continuity, neighbourhood, insideness and outsideness, disjunction and connection.

Echoing mathematical topological theory, and following Serres, Latour's (1990b) 'immutable mobiles' maintain their 'shape' while passing through certain transformations. Law (2002: 93) notes that "immutable mobiles are themselves a network, an array. They are objects. But they also pass down or through a network, held in an array of secure and stable surroundings". In that sense the category of 'island' is an immutable mobile, conforming to the particular shape, disclosed as a network effect, of its discursive construction within the literature of island studies. The immutable mobile would provide the stable array in the topological model I seek to employ in finding an entry point and following the political discourse of Tasmanian islandness.

Three topological relations of island

An examination of the accounts of islands provided by islands studies academics and the more extensive literature of islands suggests that there are three topological relations that are central to 'island'. Islands, in their material, discursive and social construction are composed from the relations of land and water, island and continent and island and island. All three relations can be discerned in Pliny the Younger's (cited in Van Duzer, 2004: 37-38) account of 'floating islands' in a 'marshy pond' on the banks of the Tiber River:

The lake is perfectly circular, like a wheel lying on the ground ... No boats are allowed on the lake, as its waters are sacred; but several floating islands swim about it, covered with reeds, rushes, and whatever other plants the fertile marshy ground nearby and the edge of the lake produce. Each island has its peculiar shape and size, but the edges of them all are worn away by their frequent collisions with the shore and one another ... Sometimes they cluster together and seem to form a little continent; sometimes they are dispersed by the shifting winds; at other times, when the wind falls dead, they float in isolation. Often a large island sails along with a small island joined to it, like a ship with its tender, or as if one were striving to out-sail the other; then again they are all driven to one spot on the shore, whose limits they thus advance; and now here, and now there, they diminish or restore the area of the lake, until at last they occupy the centre again and so restore it to its usual size. Sheep, seeking grass, proceed not only to the shores of the lake, but also upon these islands, nor do they perceive that the ground is mobile, until, far from the shore, they are alarmed to find themselves surrounded by water, as though they had been suddenly conveyed and placed there. Afterwards, when the wind drives them back again, they as little perceive their return as their departure.

There is a considerable tension between this description and the long-standing notion that what defines an island is its encirclement by water and small size by comparison with the 'main' land. In Pliny's account, not only do islands float, they can 'float in isolation' or 'cluster together' to form a 'little continent'. Indeed, the spatial relation of island to island has a central place in Pliny's description: 'often a large island sails along with a small island joined to it'. While Pliny's floating islands are certainly idiosyncratic in terms of their specific and unsettling articulations of the three topological relations of islandness, these three relations can be readily observed in numerous other descriptions of islands. Take, for example, John Pearn's (1995: 1) account of Tasmania's most infamous prison island, Sarah Island:

This small island, even today remote, lies in Macquarie Harbour on the west coast of Tasmania. In the first half of the nineteenth century ... it lay at the limits of the mapped and know world. Of all the world's prison islands, Sarah Island and its tiny satellite, Grummett Island, were the most infamous. Unlike that other famous island of incarceration, Devil's Island off the coast of French Guiana, Sarah Island received primarily recidivist prisoners, and those of the worst type. Unlike St Helena, no ships

other than supply ships, and those infrequently, called there. Unlike the Chateau d'If, off the coast of France, the graveyard was not the sea, but an ever growing array of crosses on another satellite, Halliday Island. This later came to be viewed as a haven of considerable appeal, albeit in death, by the living inmates of Sarah and Grummett Islands incarcerated nearby.

Sarah Island is conceived in relation to other islands (both close and distant), in relation to isolation enacted by the surrounding of land by water (and in turn by the remoteness of the location itself), and in terms of its penalogical difference from the larger mainland prison of Van Diemen's Land itself. What I would like to highlight in both the example from Sarah Island and from Pliny's floating islands is how these images serve to unsettle definitions usually thought of as fixed, suggesting that the critical relations of island spatiality are "immanent to their own development" (Webb, 2005: 128). These figurations of islands underscore Law's (2002: 95) claim "that questions of spatiality and object continuity are settled together". As such, "there is therefore no universal logic or epistemology [of islands]; only relations which themselves define a shifting temporal, spatial and discursive topology" (Webb, 2003: 228). With that qualifier, I now present an outline of the three ontological relations out of which the figure of the island is routinely composed: land-water, island-continent, and island-island.

Land - water

Islands are first and foremost characterised by an intense, enduring and inter-defining relationship between the elemental forces of land and water. "All islands" asserts Gabriella Cundari (1999: 211) "have one thing in common: a close relationship with the sea". In its etymology, physicality and meaning, the island is, in quite a particular way, of the sea.¹⁴ The etymological root of 'island' as an "eternal contest between land and water" (King, 1993: 14) has been a standard reference point for a discussion of island spatiality (for example, see Royle, 2007). Contemporary understandings of island can be traced back in

¹⁴ Here, 'water' and 'sea' are used interchangeably. However, 'fresh-water' islands, such as are formed in suite with lakes and rivers, are, in certain ways dependent upon differences between 'sweet' and 'salty' water, and are therefore different to the brine-encrusted islands typical of the 'seas' proper.

time via a series of linkages of ‘is’¹⁵ (isle, ile, y, īg, aujō, a3wjō, áHwō, [‘aqua’]) and the relatively constant ‘land’. With islands, and especially Western conceptions of islands, the tension between water and land is often resolved in favour of land at the expense of water. An etymological reading of ‘island’ suggests that the contemporary island is a compound of island and land. That is, land is added twice over to the meaning of island.¹⁶ Water, though it is essential to the definition of an island, is downplayed in its etymology. While it might be commonplace to refer to an island and merely signify its land surface, it is only by forgetting the tension between land and water that islands could be mistaken for, and equated solely with, the terrestrial. In one sense “the sea is as much the island as is the land” (Beer, 1990: 272). Islands constitute a specific *becoming* or mutual achievement of land and water.

The dialectical exchange of land and water creates “a founding ambiguity: formed by land, the island is nonetheless defined by the surrounding sea or lake. Its nature is, therefore, essentially hybrid” (Lestringant, cited in Conley, 1996: 330). Land, *terra firma*,¹⁷ that which is distinguished by its solidity in comparison to water, is the terrestrial, habitable and hospitable space of humans. Things can be fixed to the surface of the land, built upon the land, the ground may be cleared and the soil planted. For much of human history, the terrestrial Earth has been open to a greater range of human modifications and transformations than the aquatic Earth. Land has been intensively cultivated, mined, surveyed, measured, taxed and divided up. It has been bought and sold. As many aspects of human lives are wrought out of an engagement with land, identities are often understood as tied to particular *landscapes*. Even those whose lives are tied to the sea identify with *homelands*. Wars may be fought on water and in the sky, even in the stratosphere, but predominately are fought over control and ownership of land.

¹⁵ According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (2000: n.p.), the ‘s’ in the word ‘island’ is derived from a confusion between the etymologically correct English ‘iland’, and the French ‘isle’. The French ‘isle’ is derived from Latin ‘insula’, “a component of paeninsula, ‘almost island’, whence our peninsula”.

¹⁶ Ernest Klein (1971: 388) writes that the Old English “ēgland, īgland, iegland, ‘island’ ... is compounded of ēg, īg, ieg, ‘island’, and land, ‘land’”. While the *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* (Barnhart, 2000: 545) notes that “the Old English term [īgland] ... is formed from ieg, īg island + land LAND”. The *OED* describes the etymology of island as “a compound of OE. ieg, ig, ON. ey (Norw. öy), Ofris. ey ‘isle’ + LAND”.

¹⁷ *Terra firma* was also used to refer to the mainland as distinct from islands. For example, it originally derives from territories off the Italian mainland controlled by the State of Venice, and was also used to signify the northern coast of South America as distinct from the West Indies.

Sovereignty, territory and identity are largely tied to a terrestrial identification and engagement. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) contend that water is a de-territorialised space *par excellence*, whereas land (excepting the desert) remains inexorably territorialised (Connery, 2006).

This emphasis on the elemental forces of land and water and their relational qualities lends a heightened sense of the 'natural' to the idea of an island. To the extent that nature is framed as the binary opposite of society, economy and polity, islands are thought to be places where "material values lose their despotic influence: one comes more directly in touch with the elemental – water, land, fire, vegetation, wildlife" (King 1993: 14). For Philip Conkling (2007: 194), we "are confronted with a view of the essential nature of things" as on an island "you are not living in the cocoon-net of civilization" (Nicolson, 2007: 153). Jared Diamond (1975, 1995, 2005) and David Quammen (1996) continue a tradition of seeing islands as 'natural laboratories', reading their landscapes "as an environmental allegory of isolation and over-exploitation of natural resources" (Smith, 2005: 25; see also Burney, 1997). Richard Grove (1995) highlights the importance of European colonised islands in the development of an environmental consciousness, built in part on the heightened natural significance of tropical islands. Noting the "stable antinomies of earth and water", Gillian Beer (1989: 5) suggests that the

idea of the island allows us at once the satisfactions of water and of earth, of deep flux and steadfast fruitfulness. At the same time it expresses the dreads of water and of earth, twin desolations, in which the self drifts or is confined, in which loneliness or loss predominate.

In a swipe at 'continental knowledge', Patrick Nunn (2004: 312) contends that preconceived ideas about islands position them as places "where Nature is untamed, and where Beauty is a commonplace ... where people live in close harmony with nature and do not desire to harm these environments". One powerful effect of the appraisals of the island as essentially natural has been to foreground the island as a distinctive space to which 'origins' can be both found and returned. Noting the extensive literature that has used the island as an experimental setting, Greenhough (2004: 150) argues that the attractiveness of islands relates to their ability to "define the boundaries between nature and society through the

assumption that some internal, essential, human nature is exposed when we become isolated from the rest of the world”.

Among other island scholars, Antony Dolman (1985: 57) notes “that many of the concerns of island governments, not only food and energy but also industrialisation, transport and tourism, need in large measure to be defined in terms of relationships to the sea”.

Perceiving an over-emphasis on land in the study of islands, Biagini (1999: 18) suggests that an understanding of island geography requires a “shift in perspective from a land-based to an oceanic viewpoint”. According to some scholars the emphasis on land at the expense of water betrays a comparatively recent Western and/or ‘continental’ ideological bias. Not all cultures, nor European island cultures at all times, have seen islands as *isolated* by water; rather, water has served to connect and facilitate movement between otherwise isolated land areas. Maritime cultures devote much attention to studying currents, flotsam, winds, waves, depths, straits, climates and temperature differences of the sea (for example, Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the whalers of Salem).¹⁸

Understood as “geographical entities ... islands usually have very clear boundaries” (Watson 1998: 132). The distinctiveness of an island’s separation of land and water is certainly apparent from maps, which abstract the relationship between land and water as a clear and measured line. Paul Carter (1999: 127) remarks that the conjunction of cartography and imperialism vaunted “uniform, dimensionless and self-repeating” units of knowledge. The advent of proportional mapping on a global scale was made possible in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the slow and determined development of instruments that produced longitude as precise and measurable.

Greg Denning (1980) notes that the seemingly distinct and clear boundary of an island is in practice an indeterminate and ambiguous zone of contact. While the coastline names a linear and bordered relationship between land and water, the coastal marks a less-distinct and more amorphous zone within which land and sea are brought together, facilitating the

¹⁸ The fluctuating significance of the sea in the fortunes of Van Diemen’s Land are indicative of how the land-water relation has been drastically re-configured at different times. When first settled by the British, Van Diemen’s Land was one of a very few land masses on the fast southern sea route to Australia and the Pacific. Its position in the path of the ‘roaring forties’ was then highly advantageous (Griffiths, 2005); Tasmania lost some of that advantage when steam replaced sail; and more again when air transport began to play an increasingly large role in transporting people and goods.

exchange of properties and the movement of bodies, goods and ideas. Islands are places where beach, coastline and seashore become critical sites for the delineation between, and interaction of, peoples, cultures, and natures (Denning, 2002, 2003, 2004; Farran, 2006). In the preface to *The Edge of the Sea*, Rachel Carson (1955: vii) identifies three basic seashores – rock, sand and coral – that together compose “a world that is as old as the earth itself – the primeval meeting place of the elements of earth and water, a place of compromise and conflict and eternal change”. A ship wrecked on an offshore reef marks the disjuncture in spatiality of land and water. Surviving the shipwreck, by swimming to shore (tightly grasping a piece of broken decking) and crossing the beach to the safety of the waiting (tropical) forest thicket, is indicative of a more indeterminate “partial, selective and opportunistic” border (van Houtum *et al.*, 2005: 3). Here, the linear coast¹⁹ is fleshed-out to merge with an indistinct littoral; in-between places such as the coastal lagoon facilitating the easy capture of fish and a place to bathe safely. Shipwreck survivors and beachcombers wandering back and forth on their stretch of coastline collecting discarded flotsam and jetsam know that lands are both separated and brought together by the sea. As such, an island’s boundary and border constitutes a contradictory spatiality that has the “capacity to articulate both transcendent closure and immanent openness” (van Houtum *et al.*, 2005: 3).

Borders and boundaries are certainly critical features of islands, but they are by no means peculiar to islands. According to a number of island studies scholars what is specific to islands is the encircling nature of the border and boundary given by land entirely surrounded by water (Beer, 2003; Edmond and Smith, 2003b). To circumnavigate and map an island’s coastline is to return to the place from where one started. By the circularity of the journey the line becomes the ‘island’ it outlines (Robinson, 1986), while to continue past the original point of departure renders the voyage without “destination and no ending” (Raban, 1987: 50). Thus the boundaries of an island evoke dreams of possession and fears of entrapment, the circular return to beginnings rendering the island both an authentic point of origin and a never-ending recurrence.

Island boundedness highlights two fundamental aspects of island spatiality: the idea of islands as complete worlds, and the notion that they are insular and isolated. As is typical

¹⁹ In Latin ‘coast’ is rendered as *costa*, or ‘rib’.

of borders determined by physical differences, the demarcation integral to an island is available to be overlaid and merged with other attributes, producing a symbolic, political and cultural territoriality (Paasi, 2004b). Mapping a range of attributes onto elemental distinctions has the effect of naturalising and essentialising those distinctions. “All bordering practices are expressions of the social production of space” and as such are implicated in the formation of exclusionary “inside and outside distinctions” (van Houtum *et al.*, 2005: 5). Hence, whenever the discourse relating to islands touches on what is inside the island, or what pertains between island and mainland (a spatial relation examined below), the discussion usually refers ‘islandness’ to particular forms of collectivity, making islands powerful and resonant spaces for the enactment of communities (see, for example, Cohen, 1987).

Islands appear like worlds in miniature, whole, coherent, unified and able to be ‘held in the mind’s eye’ (Austin, 2000; Edmond and Smith, 2003). The completeness of islands makes them seductive figures for fantasies of unity and possessive control; Dorothy Lane (1995) sees this as highlighting their linkage to imperialist endeavours. While Bedggood (2004: n.p.) attributes the fascination of islands to “their accessibility due to their limited scope and potential for (ideological) containment”. Vinay Lal (2000) has used the analogy of a foetus swimming in amniotic fluid and connected by an umbilical cord, underscoring the strength with which the island figures as a marker of a unified self, both held out against and supported by the world.

Dennis Austin (2000: 59) remarks that “a partitioned island” such as Britain, Fiji, Ireland, Cyprus or Sri Lanka “is a kind of *lusus naturae*, a freak of nature and therefore wrong”. Philip Steinberg (2005) suggests that such islands appear ‘contra-normative’ only because boundedness is taken to be organic and trans-historical, a natural, inalienable feature of islands. According to some, the deep-seated notion of the island as a natural unity may actually contribute, contrariwise, to an island being a fragmented space. Austin (2000: 61) averts to an “odd characteristic of those who inhabit small islands”: “their citizens are often truculent. Their politics are close to frenzy, their leaders tend to be quirky and self-important”. The limits imposed by a defined area can lead to intense competition for scarce resources, and the enforcement of social distance in the face of familiarity (Gill, 1994;

Malcolm, 2008): in other words, to the creation and heightening of divisions *within* the island (Cau, 1999). Many island studies scholars have noted that island-wide identity is largely relevant only externally, when 'off-island' (Conkling, 2007). Cohen's (1978: 454) study of Whalsay in the Shetland Islands led him to contend that "within the community itself, that is to say in micro-social interaction, the island is not a crucial referent of identity. Rather a person will be known by his lineage, by his kinship, by his township (neighbourhood) of origin and/or domicile and by the fishing boat to which he belongs". Within the island other demarcations arise: "On the island, one is either from the island or not. Not being from the island can only be experienced by being on the island. This is a paradox ... However unsure one may be of one's identity, when not on an island, being *not* from the island is not part of it" (Gill, 1994: 280).

Island scholars note that it is difficult to work out whether these internal divisions are more apparent because of the assumed coherence of the island, or because of other, more substantive conditions. For instance, Tasmania's or Ireland's²⁰ internal divisiveness could be a result of limited resources forcing inhabitants to compete, though limited resources could just as well be a reason for co-operation and solidarity. The fragmentation of island communities into defined groups has also been theorised as a product of a psychological and/or social requirement for differentiation and 'distancing' over homogeneity. The phenomenon is also highlighted by the contra-effect of projecting ideas of coherence and unity onto islands.²¹ Certainly, the field of island studies is replete with instances of the thematic insight that 'outsider' perspectives assume an internal island harmony and unity, while 'insider' perspectives emphasise internal discord and fragmentation.

The encircling of land by water leads many to figure the relationship between land and water as that of an inside and an outside. The 1983 art work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude (Figure 2-3), in which a number of islands from Biscayne Bay, in Miami Florida, were

²⁰ Unlike Tasmania, since 1920 Ireland has consisted of two distinct political jurisdictions: the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is administratively part of the United Kingdom.

²¹ Gill (1994: 284) accounts for this tension of islandness by suggesting that: "The in-group that an island community is, because of the geographic imperative, is lumbered with an ascribed self-deception which results in an actively non-cohesive community".

‘wrapped’ in bright pink plastic fabric, highlights the boundedness taken as definitive of islands.



Figure 2-3 *Surrounded Islands* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude
Photo: Wolfgang Volz (Spies and Volz, 1985: 139)

Island boundedness is associated with insularity, which, like the different notion of isolation, is often taken to be etymologically synonymous with island.²² Insularity can be understood as ‘inward-looking’ and folded back upon itself. In the meaning of insular, the body of water that surrounds an island protects and buffers it from the outside world in the same way that insulation in a house protects those inside the house from extremes of temperature. It is a matter of degree. Small islands surrounded by vast expanses of ocean and hence remote from land would appear to be more insular (and isolated) than larger islands located nearer land masses (Clark, 2004).

²² The *Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories* (Chantrell, 2002: n.p.) notes that the source of isolate “is French isolé: this derives from Italian isolato, from late Latin insulatus ‘made into an island’. Latin insula ‘island’ is the base”.

For Edmond and Smith (2003b: 2), the “defining idea of an island is its boundedness. When a land mass surrounded by water becomes as large as Australia it loses this characteristic and must be thought of instead as a continent”. On this assessment, Australia is formally an island in that it is surrounded by water, but its size is a limiting feature to the idea of boundedness, even though it is not clear how those scalar limits are set in terms of what a threshold of size would be. This point highlights the second critical topological relation of islands, which is given by the association all islands have with continents and mainlands.

Island - continent

Islands are defined as ‘masses of land surrounded by water, *but smaller than a continent*’, indicating a second fundamental relation of island spatiality that hinges on an assumed change in size, but substantively identifies *categorical differences* between islands and continents. Greenhough (2004: 151) notes that “islands would be a meaningless category without continents with which to compare them”; O’Carroll (1999: 19) contends that “continents stand in complex opposition to islands”; and J.K. Gibson-Graham (1998: 2) assert “continents are islands’ ‘other’”.

It is often an associated ‘actual’ mainland that materially embodies the relationship of difference between islands and continents: “there is always a mainland” notes island archaeologist Colin Renfrew (2004: 283). The shift from generalised/abstract continent to particularised/concrete mainland underscores the categorical and hierarchical aspect of the relation implied in differences in size. Continents are transposed to mainlands, but the substantive topological relation of difference remains.²³ The *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* (Barnhart, 2000: 213) notes that the meaning of continent derives from the “sense of a continuous tract of land” and was “first recorded in English in 1559, extended by the sense ‘mainland’, a meaning borrowed from Latin and first recorded in English in 1614”. Both terms – continent and mainland – contain the sense of extensive, discrete and continuous tracts of land that are uninterrupted by oceans and seas. After giving an initial definition of mainland – “a continuous body of land which includes the greater part of a

²³ For example, on many accounts the island of Britain (made up of England, Scotland and Wales) stands in contradistinction to ‘continental Europe’. On this assessment Europe is Britain’s mainland. Complicating this, however, Britain is itself also a mainland (though not necessarily a continent) to other islands such as Ireland. Meanwhile, Ireland is the mainland to many adjacent islands.

country or territory, in contradistinction to the portions outlying as islands or peninsulas” – the *OED* lists a number of ‘proper’ mainlands in relation to particular islands. A mainland is (a) “the largest islands of the Shetlands and ... the largest island of the Orkneys”; (b) “that part of British Columbia on the mainland of Canada, as opposed to Vancouver Island”; and (c) “the continent of Australia, as opposed to Tasmania”. Not all mainlands are continents, which might seem to imply that ‘mainland’ is a more encompassing term. However, not all continents are necessarily mainlands – the routine and contradictory framing of Australia as an ‘island-continent’ being the exemplary instance (McMahon, 2010). Compounding the difficulty of firm terms is the recognised phenomena by which islands themselves become mainlands to other islands. Tasmania, an island to the ‘island-continent’/mainland of Australia, is itself the mainland to many other islands (including King Island, Flinders Island, Maria Island, and Goat Island).

The concept of a ‘continent’ as a land mass that ‘holds together’ is another sense in which continents are counterposed to islands that are routinely perceived as perfect, natural and coherent wholes, without internal division. The connotations of ‘holding together’ are manifested in the way the world’s largest land mass – ‘Eurasia’ – is divided into several continents, each comprising a historically and geographically connected group of nation states (Lewis and Wigen, 1997). Beer (1989: 7) figures the primal ‘island-continent’ of Pangaea as the sum of the Earth’s fractured continents: “like an enormous jigsaw, the present continental forms of the globe originally fitted together in one vast continental island, surrounded by shallow waters”.

Numerous island studies scholars have argued that there are fundamental difficulties in determining a consistent basis for differentiating between islands and continents in terms of absolute size, such as area or population. Additionally, there are problems with geographical and cultural understandings of continents themselves (Lewis and Wigen, 1997). The island’s relative smallness (‘smaller than a continent’) opens it to being sidelined by its larger neighbour, yet the existence of island super-powers such as Japan and Great Britain is evidence that geographical smallness does not preclude an island nation from achieving world pre-eminence.

Countering the framing of islands as particularised ‘others’ to continental masses, islands are also figured as ‘microcosms’ – complete miniature worlds – of continents. As a miniature of larger worlds, the island acts upon the life within as a laboratory or greenhouse, quickening and intensifying the ‘cultures’ evolving more slowly and complexly in those larger worlds. Thus, for Beer (1989: 10) the island of *Robinson Crusoe* “is an experimental site on which we watch the hero reformulate just such a bourgeois culture as he has sought to flee. The setting becomes not only the place but the condition of the experiment”. As both ‘other to’ and ‘microcosm of’, the relation of islands to mainlands is often loaded with the associations of isolation, alterity and insignificance.

Without the rider ‘but smaller than a continent’ every mass of land could be called an island. Biagini (1999: 27) noted that “we cannot even be sure that we know, in every case what an island is. ... How can we establish a threshold (of size, or any other kind) beyond which we are no longer dealing with an island but with a continent?” With an area of over two million km² and a very low population density, Greenland tops the list of the world’s largest islands. However, Greenland’s status as an island is not solely reducible to its geographical size, rather “if it had a temperate climate, many more inhabitants would have settled there, and it might be regarded as a continent” (Biagini, 1999: 27).²⁴ In a comprehensive analysis of ‘large-scale geographical concepts’ Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen (1997) have argued that definitions of what constitutes a continent are fraught with problems. Far from being stable, static and natural entities, as commonly presented, continents, like their island ‘others’, are inherently unstable.²⁵

Similar attempts have been made to differentiate islands at the smaller end of the scale, whereby rocks, reefs and skerries have been distinguished from islands on the basis of various attributes – one definition often cited is that an island is anything that can support

²⁴ Of course, this begs the question of Antarctica’s status as a continent.

²⁵ Lewis and Wigen note (1997: 33-34), “Greenland, Borneo and New Guinea may reasonably be denied continental status due to their connection, via continental shelves, with much larger landmasses. Such a distinction, however, cannot be applied to Madagascar, New Zealand, or even New Caledonia. ... Evidently, some unspecified minimum size implicitly differentiates an island from a continent. Yet in practice few scientists seem concerned with the issue or even with maintaining consistent usage. Edward O. Wilson, for example, writes that ‘in biogeographical terms Australia is only an extremely large island’ but then goes on to assert in the same text that Madagascar – which is less biogeographically distinct than Australia – should be considered ‘a small continent’.”

a single sheep – yet the issue of island size has not been resolved at this end of the scale either.²⁶ Within island scholarship there has been a tendency to treat islands as *necessarily* small (Selwyn, 1980), and one trajectory within the field has been to apply progressively smaller area and population thresholds as a means by which to tighten the definition of islands. Douglas Lockhart (1993: 130) suggests that “one of the initial problems confronting those studying islands is how to define smallness”. Often, island studies has merged with the study of small states (Burton, 1967) and there was intense debate in the 1980s about whether or not the critical explanatory variable was ‘islandness’ or ‘smallness’ (for example, Selwyn, 1980; Shaw, 1982; see more recently Anckar, 2006).

Contrary to topography’s gridded measurement in time and space, the scale of conceptualisation and action is relative; it is not given in the size of things but is a relational achievement (Howitt, 1998, 2002, 2003). Indeed, “scale is not about the size of things but the spatial and temporal relations among them” (Sayre, 2005: 28). One effect of framing the island as ‘smaller’ is to privilege the larger land mass and to perceive the relation in terms of other hierarchical concepts such as centre/periphery, metropolis/province, international current/cultural and economic backwater. According to Gibson-Graham (1998: 2) the orderings that follow from the continent/island binary are “structured by hierarchies of value: presence/absence, sufficiency/insufficiency, positivity/negativity, completeness/lack”. One implication of this spatial imaginary is clear: to be small is to be vulnerable, dependent and problematic. The idea of smallness as a problem recurs in island studies. Biagini and Hoyle (1999: 12) purport that this “one variable, *size*, has positively a considerable impact, as a limiting factor, upon development prospects” while Barry Bartmann (1997: 43) contends that conventional assessments of ‘economies of scale’ position “existing states ... [as] inadequate because they could not meet the needs of their citizenry within the narrow confines of a small territory and population”. Some island scholars suggest that this aspect of the relation between islands and mainlands is what

²⁶ The question of a distinction between an island and a ‘rock’ is the topic of numerous international legal disputes (Gjetnes, 2001); island status conferring full maritime rights to areas of territorial sea, the continental shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone. In a review of recent adjudications by the International Court of Justice, Phaëdon Kozyris (2008: 334) notes that the distinction does not turn directly on the size of the island. Rather, islands must contain ‘terra firma’ at high tide, and “further, if an island cannot sustain habitation or an economic life of its own, it is to be treated like a ‘rock’ and entitled only to territorial sea. Distance from the coast is [also] a key criterion”.

unites all islands (though presumably with the exception of Japan and Great Britain). Royle (1989: 107) has contended that the plethora of administrative and jurisdictional statuses that islands exhibit “conceals a universal commonality about all islands. Each of them has been subject to extra-territorial political control” and more strongly, “all islands [have been] dominated, at some if not all times, by more powerful continental powers”. However, the same applies to most if not all continental powers.

The notion that islands are necessarily small means that they are also taken to be inherently peripheral, marginal and limited in relation to continents and mainlands. Significantly, the assessment that islands are isolated and insulated is also tied up with the relation of islands to continents. Here, too, there is evidence to show that however much water intervenes between an island and other land masses, the island is not necessarily isolated on that account. Prior to the development of steam power and its harnessing to railways, islands were less isolated than inland areas: before the invention of the aeroplane the sea was *the* medium of global connection (Beer 1990). For most of recorded time islands, maritime cities, and settlements on navigable rivers have had greater scope for expansion than land-locked inland settlements. Island studies’ recent return to a maritime concept²⁷ would move us away from viewing boundedness and geographical smallness as necessarily limiting. According to this reading, islands are not closed off; rather they are opened to the world via the waterways of ocean and sea. The world’s oceans both enclose land and facilitate free movement between lands (Steinberg, 2001). Baldacchino (2005b), following Paul Gilroy (1993) and James Clifford (1997, 2001), has aptly phrased the shift as emphasising ‘routes’ as well as ‘roots’ (see also Bonnemaïson, 1985; Deloughrey, 2007). Isolation, like many of the apparently inherent characteristics of island spatiality, is therefore contingent and relative, even though its use as a descriptor of islands stems from the assessment that islands are cut off from the developments that happen on continents and mainlands.

What first appeared as a variable qualification, ‘smaller than’ points towards more basic features of island spatiality. Closely related to the notion that islands are peripheral, marginal, insular and isolated is the suggestion that they are, in some way, radically

²⁷ For example, see the special issue on maritime space in *The Geographical Review* 89 (2) and works by Steinberg (1999; 2001).

different to continents. O'Carroll (1999: 19) suggests that the "half-forgotten epistemological division between islands and mainlands" is fundamental to a geographical ordering of the world; an argument Tom Conley (1996: 179) supported after he noticed that the geographical schemas of Strabo and Ptolemy "each divided their topic into treatments of continents and islands". The distinction rested on the assessment that islands were unique, which in turn foregrounds the empirical role islands played in the early development of evolutionary biology and social anthropology. The notion that islands are both naturally and culturally distinct is reflected in the high percentage of island sites in UNESCO's world heritage list; in this respect Clark (2004: 292) notes "islands harbour a disproportionate share of global biocultural diversity". The distinctiveness of islands is a feature of their long-standing tourist appeal. Baum (1998: 118) contends that islands are

perceived by visitors to offer a significantly different environment to the pace and pressure of 'normal', particularly urban living ... Islands are seen as slower paced, perhaps 'backward' in their culture, emphasising traditional, old fashioned values – a real chance to 'get away from it all'.

Jean-Didier Hache (1998: 49-50) suggests that "'islanders' are the people of the periphery, that is ... those who are, or who feel, distant in space from a centre where the administrative, cultural, or economic power lies", although, again, Manhattan, Japan or Britain seem difficult to imagine as marginal. King (1999: 95) has declared there "is little doubt that islands are demographically distinct" from "their continental counterparts" even while noting that the "reasons for these differences are not the same for islands the world over":

A statistical analysis of Latin American and Caribbean data supports this view that island status is linked to an early demographic transition, independent of intervening socio-economic factors. On the other hand, in the Pacific the relationship is, if anything, the reverse, with the persistence of higher fertility on islands despite favourable and rising standards of living (King, 1999: 97).

King's (1999: 97) conclusion was "clear if contradictory: islands do differ demographically from adjacent continental regions, but this difference varies from one part of the world to another". So the demography of the majority of islands indicated to him no great similarity

(apart from 'higher migration rates') but it did show that most islands will be necessarily different from their mainlands.

Island - island

Like most landmasses, islands have smaller islands off their coasts, which complicate the purity of the island form, intervene between the main island and the sea, modify the otherwise simpler interaction of shore and sea, and impact in other ways as well. On the face of it, the relation of island to island is a relation between equals, with all that equality implies by way of comparability, fellow-feeling, alliance, sibling rivalry, and so on. When there is a significant disparity in size or population, however, the relation may be enacted according to the unequal one of island to continent. Jonathan Raban (1987) presents an exaggerated, nearly comic diagnosis of the Isle of Man's bristling rivalry with mainland/island Britain. Raban (1987: 62) recounts an Isle of Man newspaper poster: "FIRE BRIGADE IN PEEL CAT RESCUE DRAMA. With its miniature railways, its miniature roads, its miniature landscape and its miniature news, it was clear that the Isle of Man was not so much itself but a scale model of something bigger". The relation of island to island is one that tends to repeat, amplify and intensify the relations of land-water and island-continent. There are numerous ways in which this relation of repetition is acted out, many of which destabilise neat distinctions. In Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, rock islands off Wild Cat Island served as camouflage, breaking the simple relation of lake and island by their choppy pattern of equal parts of water and rock, and complicating the shore at their end of the main island:

But there was just a chance that he might find what he wanted at the south end where the island broke up into smaller islands, bare rocks sticking up out of the water, some of them lying so far out that he had not thought it was safe to come very near when they had been sailing round in *Swallow* (Ransome, 1964: 46).

Ransome describes the confusing relation between islands – the 'island broke up into smaller islands'. One island was many islands. In other senses too, islands always seem to contain other islands within themselves. Like the nests of identical Babushka dolls, one opens to reveal another – and yet another – within. This 'archipelagic' feature of islands

highlights the importance of notions of repetition, similarity and difference to the analysis of islands and the orderings they are associated with. The island to island relation has been expressed in a number of island studies works. Antonio Benítez-Rojo (1992) utilised the idea of a 'repeating island' to explore chaotic currents in Caribbean literatures. Island archaeology has developed an approach, known as 'reticulate evolution' (for example, see Broodbank, 2000; Terrell, 2004) that focus analysis on islands as necessarily archipelagic and inter-related. Colin Renfrew (2004: 289) writes that "archipelagic intensification is the process that arises through interactions among groups of islands in which none is dominant, and the marine interactions have a crucially significant role". Elizabeth McMahon (2005: 22) has mobilised Leibniz's idea of the 'monad' – "an individual unit that contains the properties of a whole series without a diminishment of specificity" – to identify a critical 'figurative function' of islands as archipelagos in Australia and Tasmania (see also McMahon, 2003). A phenomenon of repetition in the performance of island has often been observed of Tasmania. Repetition occurring over time and laterally, with the island's territory and social configuration, serves to clarify and intensify the perceived characteristics of islandness:

Wholes are 'ruined' by pulling them apart into segments, and parts are rendered incomplete wholes by their repetition. A repeated element becomes a part of a surface or larger composition, and/or the larger composition is rendered an assembly of co-planar parts. 'A repeated element' suggests more repetition; a rhythm is established that could continue (Radford and Oksala, 2007: 266).

The particularities of islands appear to be intimately related both to the spatiality of islands and the discursive associations that adhere to islands, and are assembled from and performed by a heterogeneous mix of human and nonhuman practices. In this sense, islands can be conceived of as contingent moments of assembling that continually re-work the three topological relations of islandness (land and water, island and continent/mainland, island and island). Unlike the regions of a continent, which are held together in one continuous space, islandness constitutes a distinctive spatiality. Within social and discursive performances, islandness is taken up through the intervening water and encircling boundary, the difference created from drawing distinctions between islands

and continents, and the intensification of those tensions within the relation of islands to one another. The next section of this chapter identifies how those three relations of islandness operate in the island of Tasmania.

(3) Tasmania-as-island

In recent years political representations of Tasmanian spatiality have emphasised its status as a single island *and* as an archipelago of 334 islands. In 1998 the newly-elected Premier of Tasmania, Jim Bacon (from mainland Victoria), developed a penchant for referring to Tasmania as an 'archipelago of 334 islands' (McMahon, 2001a).²⁸ With the spirit of a convert to Tasmania and a self-confessed island 'obsessive', the Premier crusaded relentlessly against the fallacy that Tasmania was a single island, repeatedly deploying the many against the singular: "we are not an island State, we are an archipelago of 334 islands, all the way from the Furneaux Group and King Island to Macquarie and Heard islands" (Parliament of Tasmania, 1999c: n.p.; see also Bacon, 2001a: vii, 2001b: 40). While he had in mind the potentially countless²⁹ external or satellite islands that accompany the larger island of the Tasmanian mainland, Bacon implicitly evoked a familiar image of Tasmania as fractured and fragmented – an internal archipelago divided against itself, "a 'state of islands', not just an island state" (Pemberton, 2001: 98).

While "Tasmania could well represent the Platonic ideal of an island" (Roe, 1981: 1), equally, every island is idiosyncratic in terms of its multiple and contradictory geo-historical specifics. Of Tasmania, CA Cranston (2003: 29) wrote:

²⁸ Many of Jim Bacon's parliamentary colleagues caught on to the Premier's enthusiasm for referring to Tasmania as 'an archipelago of 334 islands'. However, they often nominated a different number of islands, suggesting that they weren't as convinced of the rhetorical force as Bacon was. In Parliament, Minister Steven Kons was informing the House of Assembly of developments with improved air access to both mainland Tasmania and King Island. Of King Island another member of the Government, Mr Brenton Best, chipped in "It's part of the archipelago." To which Mr Kons replied "Yes, part of the archipelago of 342 islands" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001a: n.p.). Mostly, however, members of the government found it preferable to refer to Tasmania in the singular: "Tasmania, as an island State" (Lennon, cited in Parliament of Tasmania, 2002a: n.p.). However, when Paul Lennon became Premier following the retirement of Jim Bacon for health reasons, he reverted to what one opposition member referred to as 'the archipelago speech': "We are an islander people; it is not just the people of Flinders Island, Cape Barren Island or King Island who are islanders, we are all islanders. Tasmania is a series of islands, as the former Premier said many times" (Lennon, cited in Parliament of Tasmania, 2004: n.p.).

²⁹ Co-author of *Tasmania's Offshore Islands: Seabirds and Other Natural Features*, David Pemberton (2001: 90) noted that the Tasmanian "Nomenclature Board lists about 400 Tasmanian islands, but that includes river and lake islands and also there's a tendency to include those structures we call reefs or points. For us an island was an isolated rock surrounded by water".

The island was portrayed as the source of psychic distress, cultural disenfranchisement, intense disappointment, a land scape-goat for social evils, it was gothic, it was grotesque, it was hell, it was heaven, it was penal, it was paradise.

In the previous section I outlined both a distinctive spatiality and a discourse of island. My concern here is to show how Tasmania has been performed as an island in the light of the larger subject of how islands are enacted. A three-dimensional topological model for thinking through Tasmania's islandness would embrace the spatial, the discursive, and the geo-historical, in productive tension.

A wide variety of texts take Tasmania as their subject. They include a popular mythology, fictional literature, and formal academic accounts of Tasmanian artistic, literary, cultural, political, social, economic, environmental and historical life. This Tasmanian 'archive'³⁰ documents the social histories – or geo-historical specifics – by which the island has been constructed over 200 years, elastically, yet with some persistent features. In the archive the spatiality and discourse of the island are woven tightly together. Below, I provide two brisk 'portraits' of islandness under two 'proper names', the indigenous 'Trowenna' and colonial 'Van Diemen's Land'. In the next chapter I provide a more contemporary account of Tasmanian islandness in terms of the federated State 'Tasmania'. I undertake this task so as to introduce a specific, geo-historical lineage, from an indigenous place to a penal colony and to a modern home place for a mixture of peoples. The trajectory demonstrates the extent to which Tasmania's islandness is relative to the different actors in those lineages. It is neither my intention – nor it there time enough or space – to undertake an exhaustive account. My task is to survey how certain obdurate assemblages engage with, constitute and perform Tasmania's status as an island through their articulation of the three topological relations identified earlier in this chapter. Specifically, the ways in which relations of land and water, island and mainland, and island and island are disclosed in the narrative retelling of Trowenna and Van Diemen's Land highlights the diverse possibilities for islandness. Later in the thesis these labours serve important context in relation to empirical case studies relating to the governmental constitution of Tasmanian islandness.

³⁰ See Jesse Shipway (2005a).

I have taken inspiration from Cranston, who engaged both the historical and the spatial in imagining and structuring her anthology of Tasmanian writings. Cranston (2000: i) described the texts she assembled as “a journey along various narrative paths told by a community of story-tellers”, with the suggestion that one thereby travelled “the arterial highways of the heart-shaped island” (2003: 28). She later reflected that the “textual construction of the island” had emphasised “too much chronos, and not enough topos” (2003: 28, 29), evidently feeling that the spatiality of the island had been neglected. Whereas Cranston (2000: 28) thought to “examine the relationship between context (the origin) and text (the representation), and by implication, the relationship between natural and symbolic worlds”, I seek to avoid a structure built upon such binaries, because the structure would already premise its own ontological and representational explanation of the subject under investigation. The actor-network theory and topological mode of inquiry I use elects to follow the controversies wherever they led, so as to view the on-going, fluid constitution of Tasmania. So I re-tell two dominant stories from the extensive Tasmanian archive with the aim of exposing certain patterned assemblages that are deeply enmeshed in Tasmania.

Trowenna

Over aeons of geological time the Earth’s primal landmasses – Pangaea, Gondwana and Laurasia – have been wrenched apart, forced together, drifted, and changed shape as tectonic plates variously spread, bumped, subsumed, and ground against each other. During the Quaternary period of the last two million years the global position of major continents altered only marginally whereas the shape of the land masses continued to change (Clark and Cook, 1986; Jennings, 1974; Strahler and Strahler, 1987). Interacting with those geological changes were variations in solar radiation, which produced warmer interglacial and cooler glacial periods, during which time the world’s sea levels rose and fell. During one glacial period some 40,000 years ago, when Tasmania was a peninsula of a much larger land mass extending as far north as present day Papua, people migrated southward seeking new hunting and foraging lands. The land bridge over which they travelled was severed some 12,000 years ago, with the onset of the last period of

interglacial warming. Rising sea levels flooded the shallow isthmus,³¹ producing the island of Trowenna; one of the names given to the island by the descendants of the people who were 'cut-off' and 'left behind' by the rising waters. It seems unlikely that Trowenna, "Trou.wer.ner (Eastern dialect), and Lou.trou.wit.ter (Bruny dialect)" (Cranston, 2000: 1), was experienced as an isolated and insular island by its Palawa inhabitants. More likely, they perceived their homeplace as a complete world (Mudrooroo, 1987), "a universe in its own right, a centre of experience, community and connection" (Atkinson, 2009: 307).

Contemporary accounts of the Aboriginal inhabitation of Tasmania emphasise how the lives of Palawa were composed from close interrelationships amongst geography, resources, social structures and seasonal migrations. According to Robson and Roe (1997: 1), somewhere "between 4,000 and 6,000 persons ... supported themselves on the island at the time of European arrival". Social units ranged from small domestic familial groups; larger patriarchal groups, or bands numbering, on average, from 40 to 50 people; and tribes averaging between 350 and 470 people (Ryan, 1996). Tribes were held together by a shared language, cultural traits, intermarriage, seasonal movements, and economic resources. Sometimes the 'country' or land a tribe identified with was defined by sharp geographical boundaries, such as Macquarie Harbour, on the west coast of the island, which separated North West and South West tribes (Figure 2-4).

³¹ An area known as the Bassian Plain and covered by present day Bass Strait. Jennings (1974: 23) writes: "Then came the most important happening of all; the sea lapped over the eastern submarine ridge between Flinders Island and Wilson's Promontory, cutting Tasmania off from the mainland."

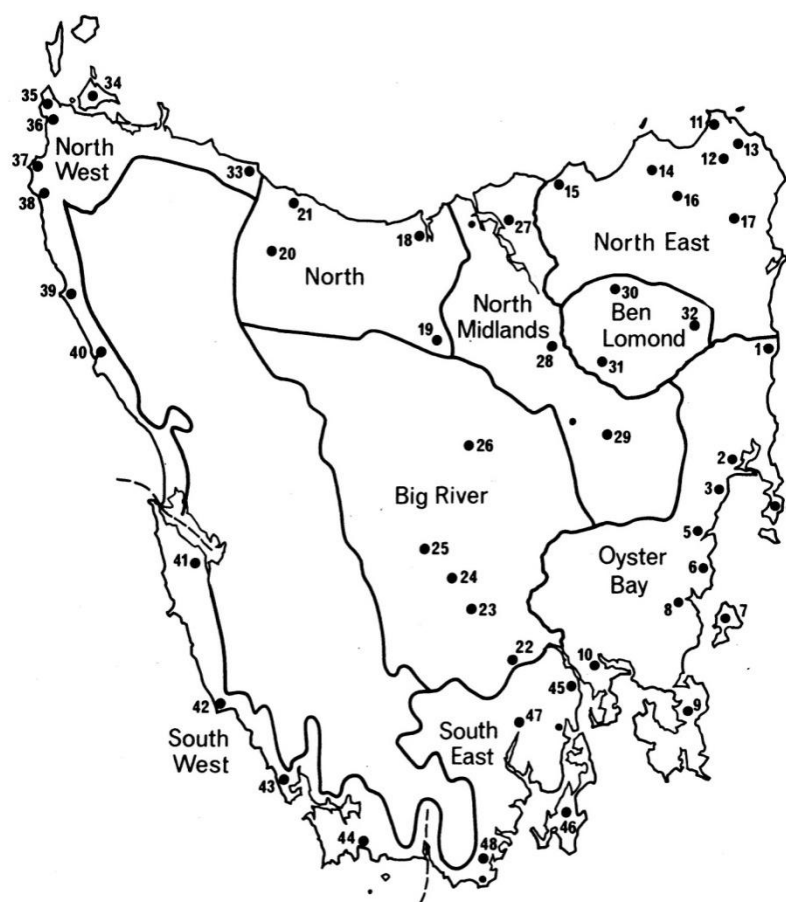


Figure 2-4 Tasmanian Aboriginal tribal boundaries
– numbers refer to band territories (Ryan, 1996: 15)

In some instances, overlapping portions of neighbouring territories provided relatively peaceful transition zones. Archaeologist Rhys Jones (cited in Ryan, 1996: 14) contended that social and political units were held together and enacted by a system of peace and aggression: “peaceful relations were within the agglomeration”, “enmities and military adventures were directed outside it”. Lyndall Ryan (1996: 13) differs slightly in identifying bands as “the basic unit for feuding with other bands”. Certainly, in turn the larger tribal areas were fragmented by band territories; many of these too, were identified with important sources of sustenance such as “well-marked geographical features like rivers and lagoons” (Ryan, 1996: 13). The east coast Oyster Bay tribe, possibly the largest at around 750 people, was made up of ten bands, including the Tyreddeme (No.7 Figure 2-4) whose members occupied Maria Island, and the Moomairremener (No.10 Figure 2-4) from the Pittwater area near Risdon, over the River Derwent from modern day Hobart, the island’s capital city. While adhering to band and tribal boundaries, Aboriginal Tasmanians engaged in seasonal migrations outside their territories, mostly during austral spring and

autumn, to coincide with the sedentary or migratory distribution of mutton birds and seals by the coast, and wallabies, kangaroos, possums and fermenting sap from *Eucalyptus gunni*, inland. People also travelled to mine ochre and stone tools, and to conduct ceremonies or trade with other tribes. Their movements followed established routes that provided “maximum access and minimum trespass” (Ryan, 1996: 19).

Henry Reynolds (2004: 1) contends that “the past has always haunted the present in Tasmania” and in many ways the last two centuries of Tasmanian indigenous history are haunted by the spectre of islandness. This point was brought home to me in 2003 when I watched again Tom Hayden’s controversial 1978 film *The Last Tasmanian*, which tracks the archaeologist Rhys Jones in an exploration of ‘the life and death of the Tasmanian Aborigines’. The film has been criticised for its maintenance of the myth of complete genocide and refusal “to acknowledge that the present-day Aboriginal Tasmanian community had any continuity with the past Tasmanian Aborigines” (Ryan, 1996: 255). In the film I was struck by how often the tropes of ‘island’, ‘isolation’ and ‘insularity’ frame understandings of Tasmanian Aborigines.

European accounts of Tasmanian Aborigines often stress their insularity: describing them as a distinct people or ‘race’ separated from mainland Aborigines by the barrier of Bass Strait, ‘isolated’ from the rest of the world for 10,000 years, “probably one of the longest periods of isolation ever recorded in human history”, thought Jones (1974: 27). Cut off by the strait, the Tasmanians are seen as ‘left behind’ with the “simplicity of their material culture” (Jones, 1974: 27) whereas their continental counterparts developed, for example, “new fashions of stone tools” and domesticated the dingo after it arrived on the Australian mainland some 7,000 years ago. According to the archive, worse was to follow. In their insular home, the Tasmanian Aborigines not only stagnated, they declined, losing what they once had: “they had no spear-throwers, boomerangs, shields, complex baskets or hafted edge-ground axes” (Jones, 1974: 28). Four thousand years ago they gave up the practice of eating scale-fish and stopped fashioning bone tools. On the basis of this evidence, Jones asked (1974: 28),

Can we think of the Tasmanian Aborigines as static fossilised representatives of early Australian man and his culture? I think not, for the archaeological sequence on the

island shows that the Tasmanians discontinued several cultural traits during their long stay on the island.

Thus a spatial discontinuity was related to a cultural reversal. But what explanation could make sense of that relationship? Jones (1974: 28-29) wondered if discontinuities were “the result of isolation and the lack of outside stimulus? Or is it that cultures as well as animals, stranded on islands, are protected from the full blast of the forces of natural selection which are operating elsewhere?” That late twentieth century interest in Tasmanian Aboriginal isolation had precedents. In the nineteenth century, as anthropological theories of ‘race’ co-evolved and mingled with revolutionary Darwinian evolutionary thought, the Tasmanian Aborigines achieved fame as a ‘missing link’ in theories of human ‘development’ (Tylor, 1894). The collection of Tasmanian Aboriginal bodies became a valid form of scientific investigation in nineteenth century Tasmania. In the name of science, graves were dug up and bodies stolen. In Hayden’s film, some of these ‘remains’ are shown, housed but isolated from their home, in the drawers and cabinets of various European museums.

Van Diemen’s Land

The first recorded European sighting of Trowenna was on 24th November 1642 from a small war yacht the *Heemskerck*, accompanied by a supply ship the flute *Zeehaen*, a convoy of the Dutch East India Company under the command of Abel Tasman. The Dutch ships had sailed from the Mauritius islands in the Indian Ocean more than six weeks before, so the sight of mountain peaks rising above the sea in the east must have created a deal of excitement for the 110 men aboard. There was a flurry of activity the next day, when inclement weather briefly relented, and Tasman set his draftsman to work charting the variegated indentures of the inhospitable south-west coast. During the periods when the weather allowed them to stay in touch with land the Dutch were kept busy, following the instructions of Anthony van Diemen (Governor-General of the East Indies) – whose name Tasman would later inscribe inside the disconnected coastline (Figure 2-5).³²

³² The following two centuries witnessed the slow crumbling of the dream, which extended back to antiquity, of discovering a Great Southern Land in the southern hemisphere. For a while the identification and charting of

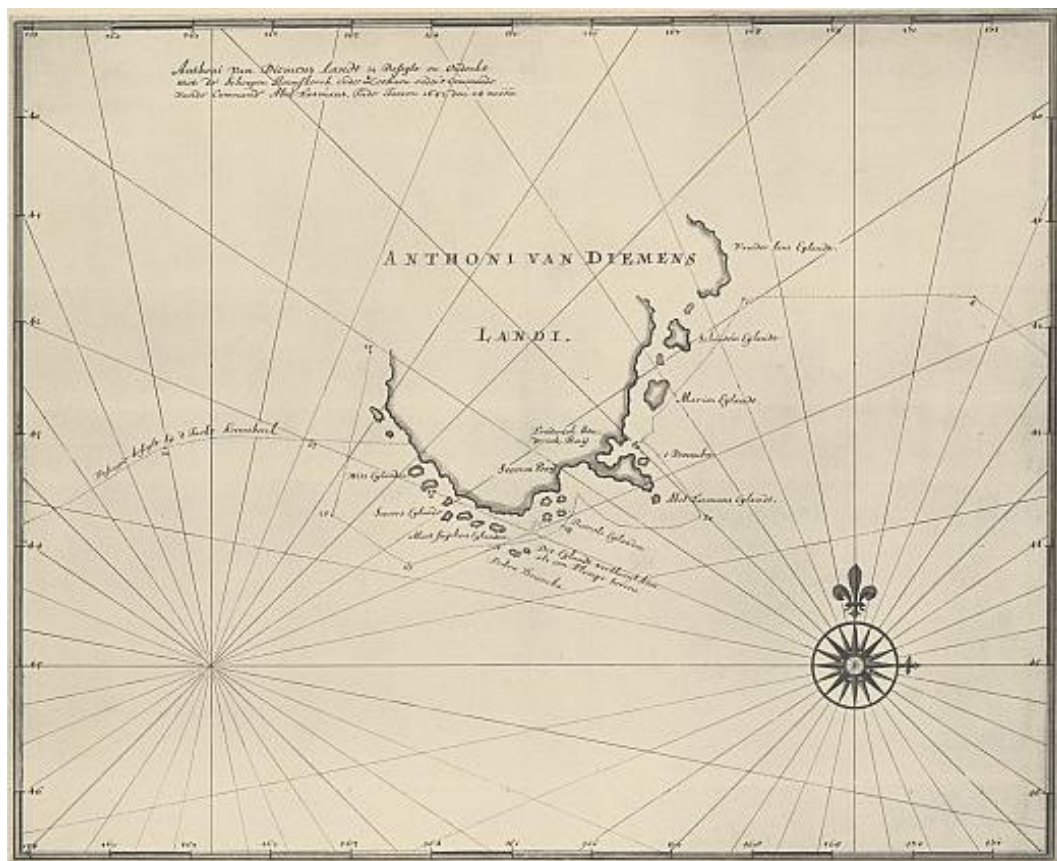


Figure 2-5 Discovery of Tasmania, 24 Nov. to 5 Dec. 1642
Map: J. Vinckeboons (NLA, 2010a)

Van Diemen's central directive for the voyage had been to map and describe all "the lands, islands, points, turnings, inlets, bays, rivers, shoals, banks, sounds, cliffs, rocks, etc. which you may meet with and pass" (cited in Eisler, 1995: 81). Cartographic orders were matched by ethnographic imperatives

you will diligently strive to gather information concerning ... their method of building houses, the appearance and shape of the inhabitants, their dress, arms, manners, diet, means of livelihood, religion, mode of government, their wars and the like notable things, more especially if they are kindly or cruelly disposed, showing them various specimens of the commodities you have taken with you for that purpose ... all of which matters you will carefully note, correctly describe and faithfully set down in drawings (cited in Eisler, 1995: 81).

unbounded coastlines "suspended in an empty ocean" (Fausett, 1993: 112) held out hope, as a type of join-the-dots game developed in which cartographers engaged in speculative and tantalising 'reconstructions' whereby disparate pieces of land (often later to become islands) might be made to connect and thus form *Terra Australis Incognita*. But with James Cook's voyages of 1772-1775, which took him into Antarctic latitudes, such a rich cartographic imaginary was lost.

Over the next seven days the expedition was blown south and then north around the southern-most tip of Trowenna, and, after encountering a gale, made anchor off Green Island in what is now known as the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. There Tasman sent ashore the pilot master of the *Zeehaen* accompanied by ten men with a view to secure refreshment and see what they could find. What they discovered (some trees they thought might be good for timber) was nothing very much that might excite the economic or geo-political interests of the trading company. And while there were mysterious traces of human habitation – human voices, a ‘gonging’ sound, trees with holes burnt at their bases presumed to have been used as fireplaces – nobody appeared out of the uncultivated landscape to trade with or offer themselves up for detailed description. Indeed, one manifest sign of human presence – notches cut into two great trees at interval of five feet or more – seemed to point towards earlier European conceptions of an antipodean “race of giants” (Beaglehole, 1966: 147; Hoare, 1969). After a few days of sailing up the east coast, prevailing winds blew the Dutch ships east towards New Zealand.

One-hundred and fifty years passed before Europeans displayed a sustained interest in Van Diemen's Land. In 1788 the British began the colonisation of New Holland (as mainland Australia was called) by establishing a settlement at Port Jackson (Sydney, New South Wales). Ten years later naval Lieutenant Mathew Flinders and intrepid surgeon George Bass were sent south from Port Jackson on a reconnaissance voyage to confirm a suspicion that the land Tasman had charted was separated from New Holland by a strait of water. If that were the case, some 700 miles and valuable time might be saved on the route to Port Jackson from Europe or India. Having undertaken a voyage in 1797 along the south-east coast of New Holland as far as present-day Melbourne, Bass was already convinced of the existence of a strait. Sailors shipwrecked on small islands located off the north-eastern edge of Van Diemen's Land had reported that powerful currents, swells and tides moved west to east, suggested that Van Diemen's Land was not an extension of New Holland, as some map-makers had extrapolated. Over the summer of 1798-1799 Bass and Flinders sailed the sloop *Norfolk* through the body of water that Flinders' suggested should be named after his companion, travelling along the northern coast of Van Diemen's Land, down the west coast, and back up the east coast, in a circumnavigation that revealed the land as insular (Figure 2-6).



Figure 2-6 A Chart of Bass's Strait between New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (1800)
Map: Aaron Arrowsmith (NLA, 2010b)

Along the way Flinders and Bass charted two estuaries, Port Dalrymple in the north, and the River Derwent in the south, both of which they concluded would make excellent sites for settlement. The newly resolved insularity of Van Diemen's Land's provided a strong impetus for British colonisation. Governor King in Port Jackson was suspicious of the political ambitions of the French scientific expedition lead by Nicolas Baudin, who, with

François Péron, had extensively explored the D'Entrecasteaux Channel during January 1802. Additionally, the island's separation from New Holland and location at the end of the earth, presented possibilities for utilising Van Diemen's Land as a natural penitentiary.

In the opening years of the nineteenth century two distinct British settlements, at either end of the island, constituted the official colonisation of Van Diemen's Land. At Risdon Cove on the River Derwent a small colonising band of 49 people was established in 1803, before being abandoned in 1804 following the arrival of another larger settlement party that set up camp on the opposite side of the river at Sullivans Cove (Hobart). In the north, a settlement at Port Dalrymple on the Tamar River was begun in 1804, to be relocated upstream in 1806 to establish Launceston at the conjuncture of the North Esk and South Esk rivers. Prior to the establishment of a useable track, the journey overland between the two settlements took approximately the same time as the sea journey from Hobart to Port Jackson: in 1807 it took nine days to travel overland from Launceston to Hobart (Stancombe, 1953, 1955). Until 1812, when control of the whole island fell to Hobart, these two settlements were administratively independent from each other, each having its own lieutenant-governor and each controlling a portion of the island divided into two 'counties', Cornwall in the north and Buckingham in the south. For the first 30 years after British colonisation, the best agricultural lands in Van Diemen's Land, those of the Midlands between Launceston and Hobart, were quickly taken up by a relatively small number of free-settlers in very large land grants (Morgan, 1992). Ever since, Hobart and Launceston maintain distinctive communities, preserve long-established familial networks in their hinterlands and have separate lines of communication with the mainland. Many more divisions were to follow, producing Tasmania as an island beset by 'regional rivalries' that

derive from the nature of settlement and product which splits Tasmania into three broad regions. The south was first settled with a strong convict element, and has remained the administrative and government hub. The north, centred on Launceston, was a region characterised by free settlement and has a strong rural base. The north-west and west is more isolated and sparsely populated, and is dependent on mining, forestry and, more lately, agriculture (Chapman *et al.*, 1986: 118).

The first two hundred years of predominately British settlement provides evidence for diverse topological ‘crumpling’ of islandness. During much of the nineteenth century the antipodean British colonies of Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania), Port Jackson (New South Wales), Port Phillip (Victoria), Moreton Bay (Queensland), Swan River (Western Australia) and South Australia were separate places: “In 1825 Van Diemen’s Land was administratively detached from New South Wales and equipped with its own judicial establishments and Legislative Council” (Robson and Roe, 1997: 17). Prior to this Van Diemen’s Land was effectively a sub-colony of New South Wales.³³ The implications of the proclamation for separate colony status were considerable. Not only did it set the scene for the other four colonies, as they became settled and established, to be separate themselves, it also set the scene for the creation in 1901 of a commonwealth and six states. Thus, by the 1890s when federation was being planned, Tasmania was already, in many ways, insular from the mainland. It had its own two levels of courts, its own bi-cameral parliament, which had come with the granting of self-governance in 1856, its own postal system and postage stamps, its own customs system, and a whole host of other facilities that made it self contained and as self-sufficient as it could possibly make itself. Certainly, in the early years of the nineteenth century, no appreciable ‘disabilities’ obtained to the southern colony from its islandness. In addition to the use of the island as a prison-colony, appreciable advantages were accorded to the island, which was not seen as ‘small’, but as having several advantages over the equally small, and widely-separated, mainland colonies.

Charles Jeffreys (1820: 1) began his emigrant’s guide to prospective British settlers by advertising that “Van Diemen’s Land, or Tasmania,³⁴ is an island of considerable extent”.

³³ For the first 35 years after British settlement New South Wales was ruled by a succession of governors. In 1823 an English Act of Parliament granted the colony its first taste of self-government when provision was made for an appointed Legislative Council to assist the Governor.

³⁴ Apart from appearing on an atlas in 1808, this was the first printed use of ‘Tasmania’ (Boyce, 2008: 158). A work similar to Jeffreys’ by the Deputy-Surveyor General of Van Diemen’s Land, George William Evans, was published in 1822. Evans (1822: 1) also begins his description by noting that “Van Diemen’s Land is an island of considerable extent”. In the preface Evans (1822: vi) restrains himself from accusing “Mr Jeffreys of plagiarism, but the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen’s Land (Lieut.-Col. Sorell) will testify that he perused the manuscript of the following pages at the close of the year 1819”. “In explanation of this unison, I can only say that I was once a passenger in His Majesty’s brig *Kangaroo*, under Lieutenant Jeffreys’s command, and that, upon that occasion, I had the good fortune to recover some missing parts of my manuscript, from the hands of his clerk” (Evans, 1822: vi).

As well as being “exquisitely beautiful” the island enjoyed the benefits of “British laws” and an “able governor” who was a “considerable ornament” to colonial society (1820: 16, v, 6). Van Diemen’s Land was superior to New Holland: there were “no extremes of heat or cold, of wet or dry” producing a climate “the most salubrious of any on the globe for a European constitution” (1820: 147, 8). The interior of the island, excepting the wilds of the south-west, were thought to be accessible even in the absence of roads. Jeffreys’ (1820: v, 84) contended that a rider on horse-back could travel from Hobart to Launceston on a summer day, traversing “fertile and valuable plains”, an “enchanted Elysium, which may not inaptly be called another Paradise”. The land was “rich, and even luxuriant”, and the grasslands of the Midlands (between Hobart and Launceston), created from continual firing by Aboriginal Tasmanians, were “picturesque and diversified with wood, hill and valley” (1820: 87, 85). Overall, the island was “unmatched in advantage to the emigrant, in climate and capability for production by any other part of the globe” (1820: v). Certainly, the British settler, who chose Van Diemen’s Land over Port Jackson or the western colonies of the United States, arrived to what many understood to be “an Arcadian paradise in the Southern Hemisphere” (Petrow, 1995: 7).³⁵

The island was also readily accessible by sea. The sea at that time was the only medium of global communication and the predominant means of inter-colonial interaction; consequently Bass Strait was far from the barrier it later became (Bassett, 1969; Lennon, 1973). The colony’s position on the southern sea route to New South Wales was a key feature of its amenity during the colonial period. At Hobart, the River Derwent estuary provided “one of the finest natural deep water harbours in the world” (Jackman, 1974: 17), and whales and seals were in abundance. In the mid 1830s, the patriarchs of the island began sending their sons, with flocks of sheep, across Bass Strait to settle (and prosper) in Port Phillip (Robson and Roe, 1997). During the 1850s’ gold rushes to Victoria, the island colony – in particular the northern city of Launceston – had an advantage over the mainland colonies, in its relative proximity to Melbourne. However, the wheel of fortune turned against Tasmania after that time. From the 1860s through the twentieth century,

³⁵ Writing in the early 1840s, David Burn (1973: 5) noted that likely British emigrants “greedily devoured” “Jeffrey’s *Van Diemen’s Land*”, “arousing a mania, whose issue was ship-load after ship-load hurrying to their distant and eagerly-adopted homes. As may be expected, mortification and disappointment awaited many; but there is no doubt the large majority had no cause to repent their migration”.

Tasmanians saw their situation gradually become economically, demographically and socially disadvantaged by comparison with the mainland states, especially the State their sons and daughters had founded, Victoria. To successive governments, both state and federal, Tasmanian islandness was a problem.

Conclusion

Above, I claimed that diverse ontologies of Tasmanian islandness could be seen by analysing alternative articulations of the three topological relations of islandness; those of land-water, island-continent/mainland, and island-island. That claim is evident in the tensions that exist between the island's various histories. In one notable example, the so-called 'Black Line' of 1830, marked out and marched by the British colonists in an attempt to sweep the centre of the island clean of native inhabitants by pushing them into an ever-narrowing south-eastern peninsula (Tasman Peninsula), enacted a chiasmatic inversion of the peninsula's (and indeed the island's) role as the virtual island-prison that contained convicts. The subsequent rounding up and exile of the Tasmanian Aborigines to Flinders Island in 1832 repeated the exile of convicts from Britain to Van Diemen's Land. The indigenous people of pre-settlement times were seen by many colonial scholars – in particular those who sought to position them at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder – as imprisoned on the island by the surrounding water, isolated from the mainland, and in the midst of reverting to a simpler and more primitive way of life. The British prisoners and soldiers who joined the Aborigines on the island (and sought to replace them) were likewise categorised as a debased people. Under the British, the island soon displayed a pattern of geographical regions, food resources, familial, religious and tribal affiliations, and mass seasonal migrations, albeit connected to different festivals and seasonal resources, similar to those of the first inhabitants (Boyce, 2008). To this day, the patterns of regionalism and place-bound loyalties in Tasmania owe much to the vagaries of successive waves of British settlement interacting with the geography and the hybrid forms of social and political life that sprang from colonialism. Reynolds (1969a), among others, has argued that Tasmanian regionalism developed as much from complex social interactions as from geography alone. Tasmania, from soon after its children began to leave the island in the

mid 1830s, began to be depicted as a place and a community that was slipping backward in relation to the other colonies and the rest of the Western world.

In the following empirical chapters, I discuss several governmental efforts to solve the ‘Tasmanian problem’ of its islandness. Notwithstanding some claims that islands “have for the most part shed the associations with backwardness and remoteness that seemed in times past to differentiate them from mainlands” (Gillis and Lowenthal, 2007: iii), Tasmania’s islandness, during a 70-year period of the twentieth century, was taken to be a core problem, understood to be productive of a backward place and people. Several abortive attempts were made to solve Tasmania’s economic, demographic and social problems, but Tasmania and Tasmanians proved resistant. I enter the political dimension of this study of Tasmania as an island in the next chapter, where I also introduce the other major literature of relevance to the thesis, governance and governmentality.

Chapter 3 - Tasmania as 'island-community': an impossible object of governance

Tasmania is an island and many of its distinctive characteristics stem from that simple geographical fact.

R.J. Solomon, *Tasmania* 1972: 1

Introduction

The 'Tasmanian problem'

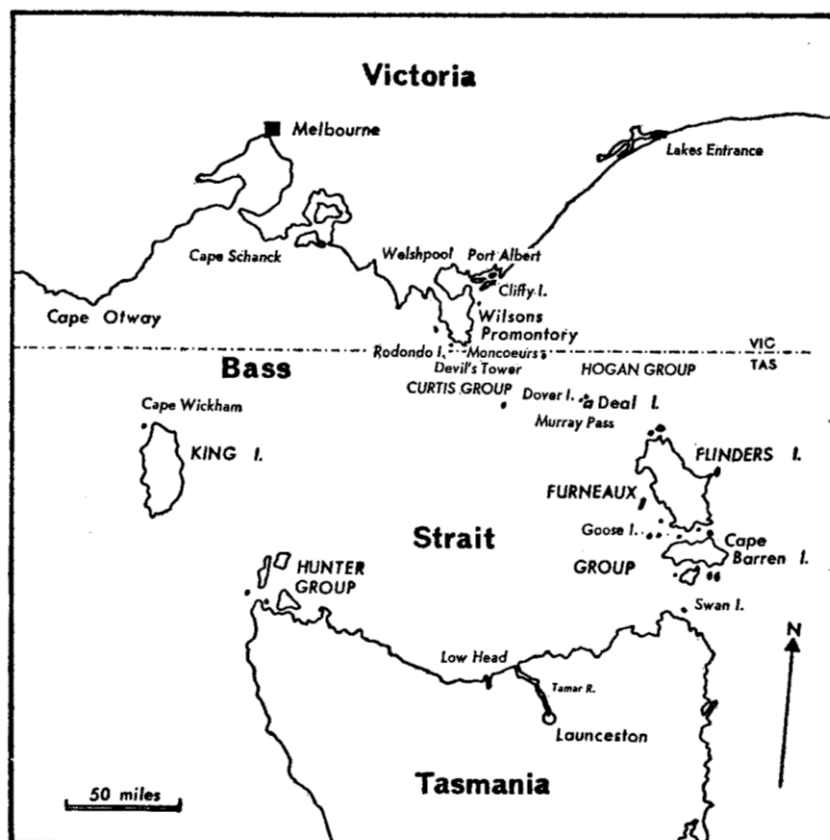
Tasmania, the smallest of the six Australian States, has often languished at the 'bottom' of the Australian scale geographically, demographically and economically. As the only state that is an island, Tasmania has routinely appealed for special federal assistance and, in turn, has been routinely subjected to governmental scrutiny. There have been a long line of governmental inquiries into Tasmania's economy and administration since federation in 1901, in which the island-State has been typically represented as an economically dysfunctional, regionally fragmented and demographically declining 'basket case'. Sir Bede Callaghan (1977: 3), who headed up one inquiry in the 1970s, observed that:

Tasmania is beautiful. Tasmania is tranquil. Tasmania is economically vulnerable. The major disability facing the people of Tasmania (although some residents may consider it an advantage) is that Tasmania is an island. Separation from the mainland adversely affects the economy of the State and the general welfare of the people in many ways, i.e. in an economic sense.

Tasmania may be beautiful, but Tasmanians *have* a problem, and Tasmania itself *is* a problem. From the perspective of a succession of state and federal governments, Tasmania's essential problem has been ascribed to the various social, cultural and economic effects of being an 'island community'. Being an 'island community' is perceived as making Tasmanians resistant to the usual mechanisms of governmental intervention. In this chapter, I argue that "the 'Tasmanian problem'" (Callaghan 1977: 94) stems from the persistent deployment of the rhetoric of 'island community' as a spatial imaginary of

strategic governance, and the equally persistent ‘failure’ – because of that framing – to ‘solve’ the problem. As such, the ‘Tasmanian problem’ is an ‘actor’ in governmental assemblages.

Governmental depictions of Tasmania as an island community emphasise its island geographies: primarily those stemming from the stretch of water that simultaneously separates Tasmania from, and connects it to, mainland Australia (Figure 3-1).



Bass Strait, which separates Tasmania from the Australian mainland. It's said that there are 126 pieces of land in this passage, but only seven of them are permanently inhabited. It is one of the most beautiful, and the most dangerous, stretches of water in the Southern Hemisphere.

Figure 3-1 Bass Strait
(ABC, 1969: 7)

Bass Strait serves as one of the key defining geographical attributes of the State's island status – one of the various bodies of water that ‘surround’ the island and position it as a complete ‘entity’. Yet, Tasmania is also routinely depicted as an island divided against itself, an internal archipelago of parochial loyalties and anachronistic regional sentiments

that threaten to break apart the State's coherence as an island; recall, for example, the divisions between Hobart Town and Launceston described in the previous chapter. Amplifying the assumption that an island would be naturally unified, I speculate that coherence is framed as a sovereign necessity within governmental discourse, and is imagined for Tasmania by mapping normative social, economic and political boundaries onto the elemental form of islandness.

Tasmanians' strong regional and place-bound loyalties are reflected in the island's idiosyncratic population structure (Figure 3-2).

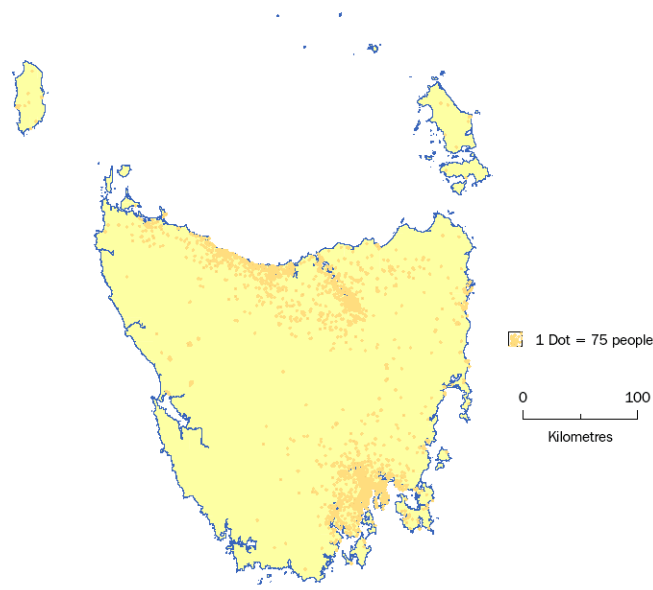


Figure 3-2 Tasmania's decentralised population structure
(ABS, 2006: 10)

Unlike other Australian states and territories, where the pattern of population distribution is dominated by one large city, Tasmania's population is highly decentralised. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006: 10), the island's population is

divided almost equally between the north and south and is the most decentralised in comparison to the other states and territories. This population pattern has resulted from geographical, historical and commercial factors which have led to the development of a number of relatively large cities and regional centres ... On the state's north coast, several regional cities, including Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, serve

as the major centres for the agricultural and industrial activities typical in this part of Tasmania.

Tasmania's intense regionalism and strong place-bound loyalties are commonly exercised in the activities and organisations that rally around appeals to 'community'. But ambiguities in how far those loyalties extend, whether they stop at the local, the regional, the State, or the national scale, create additional tensions in efforts to constitute islandness as a political rationality. While the vision of Tasmania as an 'island community' seems an attractive object of governance, promising, for example, the possibility of a naturalising and normalising homology between territory and population, such a framing of islandness and community may be suspected of *marking the limits* (rather than resources) of strategic governance. Despite these reservations, the persistent identification of Tasmania as an island community in the lineage of governmental inquiries has, over time, embedded that governmental framing as a valid form of geographical knowledge of Tasmania. For example, governmental projections of a unified island community, despite resistances exhibited by that community to 'pull together', further amplify tensions in the varied enactments of community. As such, the apparent 'failure' of this framing draws attention to the ways in which the 'Tasmanian problem' generates Tasmanian economies, subjectivities and politics.

According to Jeff Malpas and Gary Wickham (1995: 37) failure "is a ubiquitous feature of social life" and this is routinely evident in government. Failure is the rule not the exception because of three inter-related factors that precipitate a breakdown in attempts at governing: the necessarily incomplete and partial nature of attempts at ordering and controlling objects; the interference and contestation created from the multiplicity of other projects that any object will be subject to; and the tensions 'internal' to objects themselves. While a range of intersecting and competing geographies of Tasmania exist, the governmental framing of Tasmania as an island community, and the governmental practices that attend it, are then available to be taken up by, implicated in, and interpellated into, other governing activities. *A fortiori*, from the perspective that governing does not stand in opposition to or against the world, but rather is integral to and constitutive of the world within which it must operate (Malpas and Wickham, 1997;

Higgins, 2004), the failure of governmental inquiries to ‘successfully’ address the ‘Tasmanian problem’ is critical to how Tasmania is understood and governed, acting “not merely as a counterstroke to power, [but] also that which directs and shapes power” (Malpas and Wickham, 1995: 43). In this chapter I identify a trajectory whereby the many governmental inquiries into the ‘Tasmanian problem’ have themselves objectified the identification of Tasmania as an island community, making these problematic ideas increasingly central to governmental programmes.

Over the last decade the possibility of utilising theoretical accounts of governance, largely derived from Michel Foucault, in conjunction with actor-network theory has been usefully employed within the social sciences. For example, John Law’s *Organising Modernity* (1994) and Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham’s *Using Foucault’s Methods* (1999) both brought Foucault and actor-network theory together to understand the performative and constitutive modes of ordering within contemporary social formations. There are multiple, and at times diverging, links between analyses of governance and the varied writings ascribed to actor-network theory. In this thesis, the productive ‘fit’ between governance and actor-network theory is primarily indebted to the spatial emphasis given to their relation as outlined by the writings of geographers, such as Jonathon Murdoch. For Murdoch (2006: 56), while Foucault diagnoses ‘government’ as a means “to describe broader alignments of power, knowledge and practice, he fails to investigate the spatial mechanisms at work in such alignments.” Actor-network theory, as a research ethos, provides a means to take up the “Foucaultian insight that it is not power *per se* that is important but the various materials, practices, discourses in which power relations are both *embedded* and *transported*” (Murdoch, 2006: 58). An analysis of governmental spatial modes of ordering is assisted by actor-network theory’s agnostic attention to the myriad heterogeneous entities that constitute the workings of governing projects. The utility of combining actor-network theory and analyses of governance is also pragmatically related to the empirical focus of this thesis, which is directed to understanding the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness. Hence, the methodological edict of actor-network theory to ‘follow the actors’ involved in any particular controversy is, in this chapter, directed towards an examination of the constitution of islandness present in a series of governmental inquiries into the ‘Tasmanian problem’.

In light of the foregoing explanation of how I see the workings of actor-network theory and governmental thinking, the scholarly study of governance provides a theoretical context for understanding what is at stake here. In particular, Foucault's writings on governmentality provide a good starting point for analysing the spatial dimensions of governance. In the first substantive section of this chapter I briefly outline a shift away from state-centred forms of government and the advent of liberal forms of governance that increasingly mobilise non-state actors and institutions. Then I move on to show how the geography of Tasmania has been crucial to the framing of governmental intervention. I conduct a close analytic reading of *The Nixon Report* (1997), the last and most significant in the aforementioned series of government inquiries into the economy and administration of Tasmania spanning the better part of the twentieth century. The author of that inquiry, Peter Nixon, linked the themes of 'island' and 'community' early in his report when he noted the State's distinctiveness: "Tasmania has a small population and an island environment. When viewed as disadvantages, these two things create an overwhelming feeling of helplessness. When viewed as advantages, they open up a range of opportunities for Tasmania" (1997: xi).

In the inquiry a tension is perceivable between the 'eternal optimism' of governmental programmes and the 'congenitally failing' character of government in practice that typifies theoretical understandings of governance (Crook, 1999; Malpas and Wickham, 1995, 1997; March and Olson, 1983; Miller and Rose, 1990; Rose, 1996; Rose *et al.*, 2006). As his managerial guide Nixon used Michael Porter's (1990) *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* and wrote a report that was broadly representative of the "neo-liberal economic policies of deregulation, privatisation, labour market reform, and smaller government" (Maude, 2004: 5) that have been the basis of Australian federal and state governments for the last three decades. Critiques of neo-liberalism are legion in Australia (Beeson and Firth, 1998; Burchell, 1998; Dean and Hindess, 1998; Hindess, 1998; Johnson, 2000; Pusey, 2003), many of them pointing to the negative effects of national economic policies on regional areas (for example, McManus and Pritchard, 2000; Gray and Lawrence, 2001; Cheshire and Lawrence, 2005). For example, Alaric Maude (2004: 16) summarised criticisms of neo-liberal economic management as highlighting how adherents of these policies and programs have

been focussed on narrowly economic objectives, with little attention to regional differences, regional impacts and social consequences. They [critics] argue that the costs of neo-liberalism, in welfare dependency, social exclusion, educational underachievement, regional disadvantage, community relationships, social problems and personal identity, are not set against the benefits.

In terms of political rationalities and technologies, the specifics of strategic governance continue to engage academic critiques of neo-liberalism. Of particular interest are empirical examinations of the 'frictions', 'failures' and 'resistance' such governmental programmes have attracted (Ashman, 2004).

The Nixon Report exemplifies a certain form of governmental failure, and such failure is presaged by the terms in which the report is structured. Tensions and contradictions in the couching of islandness and community suggest how the use of them to frame the 'Tasmanian problem' precludes any governmental solution. Contradictions early in *The Nixon Report* raise doubts about its solutions to the 'Tasmanian problem'. There are evident dilemmas in the 'islandness' and 'community' invoked by Nixon. To amplify and verify this reading of Nixon's report, I turn to the plethora of inquiries and reports into the 'Tasmanian problem' in the century following Australian federation in 1901, examining two other reports from the extensive genera.³⁶ Political analyst Colin Richardson (1997a: 31) characterised these reports as belonging to the "'Tasmania's disabilities' genus", while another commentator noted that "sensible, pragmatic proposals fill endless reports and analyses of the state" (Way, 2000: 109). Those chosen for analysis, *The Lockyer Report* (1926) and *The Callaghan Report* (1977), were identified by Nixon as the lineage to which he was contributing. Nixon (1997: 1) noted that his task was to "update the 1977 study chaired by Sir Bede Callaghan". He also prefaced his inquiry with extracts from Sir Nicholas Lockyer's

³⁶ For example, instigated in response to Callaghan's inquiry (Felton, 2004), Sir George Cartland's *Report of Phase II of the Review of Tasmanian Government Administration* appeared in 1981. The Centre for Regional Economic Analysis (CREA) at the University of Tasmania produced a number of reports during the 1980s. The most significant was *The Tasmanian Economy: A Survey* (CREA, 1988) summarised as *Tasmania's Economic Challenge* (Chessell, 1988). Another major report, *Tasmania in the Nineties*, by Charles Curran, appeared in 1992. Nixon (1997, Vol. 2, Appendix 7) provides an introduction to the genre in his listing of previous reports that his inquiry had reviewed. Nixon listed previous inquiries according to headings such as 'Tasmania: Public Finance and Economic' (14 reports), 'Parliament and Governance' (four reports), 'Freight and Transport' (11 reports), and 'Current Reviews' (four reports). In all, Nixon identified 82 separate inquiries into the 'Tasmanian problem'.

report of 1926 and reproduced that report *in toto* as an appendix to his own inquiry. Analysis of the three inquiries demonstrates how Tasmania's political-economy has been framed by the state's geographical status as island-State of the Commonwealth, both prior to Lockyer's (1926) assessment of the 'effects of Federation on Tasmanian financial relations', and subsequent to Nixon's (1997) recommendations for 'Tasmania into the 21st century'. These reports, as a genre characterised by a limited conception of Tasmania, space and governance, indicate how, and possibly why, governmental solutions to the 'Tasmanian problem' are couched in terms that predicate failure. I discuss the extent to which Nixon's 'island community' is an impossible object of strategic governance and point towards more recent developments in the trajectory of identifying Tasmania according to this spatial imaginary.

(1) Governance, governmentality and the significance of the spatial

Governing, government and governance

Over the last three decades 'government', 'governance' and 'governmentality' have proved to be conceptually rich fronts of inquiry within political, social, economic and geographical scholarship. A variety of theoretical formulations and empirical studies have investigated the rationalities, techniques and practices by which governing takes place. As an umbrella term, governing can be used to refer to "any attempt to control or manage a known object" (Malpas and Wickham, 1995: 40). It therefore incorporates all projects aimed at the "calculated direction of human conduct" (Dean, 1999: 2), those undertaken by individual actors as well as those of collectives, such as 'governments' proper.

Such inclusive definitions of the analytical field are reflected in empirical trends. Analyses of governing have been revitalised by the identification of a permutation in arrangements of authority and control whereby non-state organisational alliances increasingly displace formal state-based structures of power. John Clarke (2007: 838) writes that a dominant theme within analyses of governing has been "a shift from 'government' (the practice of politics, policy and administration within the state-form) to 'governance' (the co-production of many agents and agencies)". In a similar vein, Erik Swyngedouw (2005: 1992), defines governance as

an arrangement of governing-beyond-the-state (but with the explicit inclusion of parts of the state apparatus) [involving] ... socially innovative institutional or quasi-institutional arrangements of governance that are organised as horizontal associational networks of private (market), civil society (usually NGO) and state actors.

Now that attention has moved to the more catholic ambit of “self-organising, interorganisational networks” (Rhodes, 1996: 652) “that are typically interdependent while enjoying substantial autonomy from the state” (Marinetto, 2003: 626), the concept of governance provides a theoretical and empirical impetus for understanding power as more than that arising within formal apparatuses of rule, such as those associated with the state. One contrast to ‘governance’ would be state forms of organisational and bureaucratic administration where instrumental forms of rationality dominate; what Max Weber (1948) theorised as an ‘iron cage’ of impersonal rules and rational procedures oriented to objective goals. Thus, while Rod Rhodes (1996: 652-3) identified a generalised sense in which governance could be used as a synonym for government, he also noted how contemporary usage “signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed”.

These ‘changed conditions of ordered rule’ have been typically associated with and placed in the context of the longer term critical impetus that liberal ‘thought-styles’ (Mannheim, 1960; and see Fleck, 1979)³⁷, and later, neo-liberal, variants, have given to government (Barry *et al.*, 1993, 1996; Dean, 1999; Rose *et al.*, 2006; Valverde, 1996). As a political ‘ethos’, liberalism was given material impetus in early-nineteenth century Britain

as a challenge to the established order, as a drive for emancipation from the perceived domination of British politics and society by the Anglican, landed oligarchy that was associated with the rigid system of ‘establishments’. ... Liberals sought new freedoms in the spheres of religion, commerce and politics, and a new openness and responsiveness to public opinion in government (Bennett *et al.*, 2007: 532).

³⁷ In keeping with his predilection for working in threes, Karl Mannheim identified a triad of ‘thought-styles’: liberalism, socialism and nationalism/conservatism (White and Donoghue, 2003; also see Kumar, 2006: 175). Ludwik Fleck’s conceptualisation of *Denkstil* (thought-style) or *Denkkollektiv* (thought collective) were to be reworked by Thomas Kuhn (1962) in his account of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* via the notion of ‘paradigm’ shifts (Babich, 2003).

While acting as a limit (and challenge) to the state, liberal political rationalities have not necessarily resulted in a reduction in governance; rather, they have fostered particular modes of governance beyond-the-state (Larner, 2000). For Mitchell Dean (1999: 15), “liberal modes of government ... are distinguished by trying to work through the freedom or capacities of the governed”. Liberalism has underscored the importance of realms separate from the state, and in whose name governance would be justified: ‘society’ or ‘civil society’ or ‘economy’. Classic liberalism, such as is associated with the writings of John Stuart Mill ([1859] 1985) assumed that society and economy were ‘natural’ discrete entities, whose existence reflected intrinsic laws and logics (self-interest, competition, market forces), and hence configured these spheres as both separate from and sensitive to ‘excessive’ governance. Liberty-seeking citizens of those spheres were understood as self-interested individuals acting according to maximising and rationalising logics peculiar to *homo oeconomicus*.

By contrast, variants of neo-liberalism³⁸ understood these domains as constructed rather than given, and hence it became beholden on governments to intervene in ‘society’ and/or ‘economy’ so as “to actively create the conditions within which entrepreneurial and competitive conduct is possible” (Barry *et al.*, 1996: 10). Likewise, “economic man”, previously naturalised as *homo oeconomicus*, “constituted as an enterprise unit with a definite lifespan” (Tribe, 2009: 692), was to be encouraged to take responsibility for his own welfare by striving to become, like the economic enterprises he worked for, “entrepreneurial, enterprising, innovative and externally orientated” (Larner, 1998: 606).

Foucault, government and governmentality

Contemporary accounts of governance are indebted to Michel Foucault’s intellectual bequest in many ways (Dean, 1999). Of particular significance here are Foucault’s historical empirical studies, which allowed him to conduct a genealogy of the modern liberal state

³⁸ See, for example, discussions by Thomas Lemke (2001) and Keith Tribe (2009) of Foucault’s account of German Ordo-liberalism and the American neo-liberalism of the Chicago School economists.

(Lemke, 2001: 191). In those investigations he identified a pre-eighteenth century and pre-statist notion of government as “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1983: 220-221).³⁹

This phrase ‘conduct of conduct’ covers later-day formalised arrangements of governing whole populations as ‘populations’, but also highlights far earlier techniques by which individuals were encouraged to govern themselves in accordance with specific moral, legal, religious, economic and sexual codes and guides of behaviour. Termed ‘the art of government’ in the sixteenth century, these techniques were not limited to the field of politics or “traditional questions of the nature of the state” (Rabinow, 1984: 15), but instead covered such things as the government of “a household, souls, children, a province, a convent, a religious order, a family” (Foucault, [1978] 1991a: 90). Foucault analysed the links between questions concerning the conduct of the self and the conduct of others (Lemke, 2001: 191), and in effect brought the normalisation and individualisation of behaviour in specific micro-locales (such as the prison, the asylum, and the clinic – sites of previous historical analyses by him) into critical relation with “the normalisation [and totalisation] of behaviour at the societal scale” (Murdoch, 2006: 41). For example, in a well-known account of the English utilitarian Jeremy Bentham’s ([1791] 1962) imagined model prison, the Panopticon, Foucault ([1975] 1991b) argues that the effects thereby proposed for penal reform can be understood as both individualising and totalising.⁴⁰ On the one hand Bentham’s ‘prison factory’ involved novel processes of subject reformation associated with a redistribution of the power relations (architectural, criminological, moral) that pertain to the spatial ordering and management of those subjects. On the other hand, the ‘diagram’ of power relations proposed in the Panopticon allowed for “the formation of a disciplinary society ... [a] generalisable mechanism of ‘panopticism’” (Foucault, [1975] 1991b: 216), an

³⁹ While much misattributed, the phrase ‘conduct of conduct’ does not actually occur in Leslie Sawyer’s English translation of Foucault’s original French ‘le conduire des conduits’. Rather the relevant section reads: “Perhaps the equivocal nature of the term conduct is one of the best aids for coming to terms with the specificity of power relations. For to ‘conduct’ is at the same time to ‘lead’ others (according to mechanisms of coercion which are, to varying degrees, strict) and a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities. The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government” (Foucault, 1983: 220-221). However, the broad impetus behind the translation retains fidelity to the original.

⁴⁰ The terms ‘individualising’ and ‘totalising’ are central within Foucault’s widely discussed reformulation of power relations. Michael Marinetto (2003: 628) writes that for Foucault “power not only totalises but also individualises: it operates through the choices and freedoms of individuals. As such it is a positive force, one that is constructive, helpful and caring of individual members of the population”.

internalised universal overseeing from a central position, that can be extended to other sites of government, such as “schools, factories and hospitals” (Murdoch, 2006: 40).

Overall, Foucault ([1978] 1991a: 87) identified what he termed a comprehensive ‘problematic of government’, a series of inter-related and inter-defining questions that link the governance of individuals to the governance of the population: “how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor”. Foucault’s aim was to show “how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence” (Lemke, 2001: 191). Hence Foucault reversed the formulation that would take “the state as the origin of government” (Rose *et al.*, 2006: 87). Instead he theorised a progressive ‘governmentalisation of the state’, whereby the state takes up and modifies – for example, in its juridical and administrative capacities – various arts (and later sciences) of government previously directed towards individuals and households, amongst other groups. Correspondingly – for example, in an examination of the doctrine of ‘reason of state’ and the ‘theory of police’ – Foucault highlighted the development of forms of rationality and technologies of rule peculiar to the birth of the modern nation-state.

In keeping with his earlier work – in particular *The Order of Things* ([1966] 2002) and the writings contained in *Power/Knowledge* (1980) – Foucault’s later interest in the ‘problematic of government’ highlighted “the reciprocal constitution of power techniques and forms of knowledge” (Lemke, 2001: 191) in the programs and practices of governance. That commitment to context and problem-specific historical analysis – what Murdoch (2006) calls ‘nominalist’ analysis – was evident in his identification of a series of overlapping and inter-related discursive regimes of governance. Foucault ([1978] 1991a) coined the neologism ‘governmentality’ for the specific modes of power and allied forms of knowledge that emerged with the development of modernity. He saw it as beginning with the Renaissance, intensifying during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and “exemplified in the form of the liberal/bureaucratic state that exists today” (Malpas and Wickham, 1997: 103).

For Foucault, governmentality has two meanings. First, as a general term, it names the links between government and modes of thought necessary to any regime of governing. The relations between political rationalities and political technologies that give effect to rule are historically specific and geographically complex. There is no one-to-one or direct relation between rationalities and technologies; rather “[p]articulate technologies can be used for different purposes and can have quite different meanings depending on their articulation with specific rationalities” (Valverde, 1996: 358). One utility of Foucault’s first meaning of governmentality, therefore, is that it focuses attention on the material ways in which questions of government are related to systems of expertise and types of vocation, technologies of calculation and classification, moral judgments and justifications, and the various mechanisms by which power is exercised. Thus, one link between Foucault’s writings on governance and actor-network theory is in the attention given to the role of knowledge in organising and ordering. However, whereas Foucault concentrated heavily on the ‘human sciences’, the grounding of actor-network theory and ‘science studies’ in an analysis of the ‘natural sciences’ (Bowker and Latour, 1987) highlights the role of scientific power/knowledge regimes in governance.

Foucault also used governmentality more narrowly to describe what he perceived to be a radically new regime of governance developing within modernity. As a discrete type of power and authority, governmentality (often just referred to as ‘government’) is characterised by the extension and incorporation of those arts of government concerning the control and management of individuals and groups, to envelop the government of entire populations. Governmentality “is bound up with the discovery of a new reality, the economy, and concerned with a new object, the population” (Dean, 1999: 19). This emphasis on governing whole populations through the register of political-economy and according to ideals of domestic economic efficiency led Foucault to coin the term ‘biopower’ to describe a type of politics oriented to “the administrative imperative to optimise the health, welfare and life of populations” (Dean, 1999: 20). Stemming from his desire to provide “an inventory of this question of government”, Foucault ([1978] 1991a: 87) placed governmentality and biopower in the context of other types of power and authority. As such, the historically specific version of governmentality needs to be

understood in relation to other regimes of governance, and in particular those Foucault referred to respectively as 'sovereignty' and 'discipline'.

Sovereign forms of power revolve around the acquisition and control of territory, are typically associated with the principalities of medieval Europe, and as their overriding interest are concerned with the maintenance and extension of the relation between prince and principality (Foucault, [1978] 1991a). In the modern era sovereignty has been democratised by the development of representative institutions associated with the development of liberal-democratic nation-states. Within these state forms, juridical and executive power is exercised over subjects, via governmental mechanisms such as "constitutions, laws and parliaments" (Dean, 1999: 19). By contrast, discipline forms of power have far longer genealogies; underwent radical expansion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (exemplified by Bentham's Panopticon); and reached their height in the mid-decades of the twentieth century. Discipline powers have varied histories and expressions within military, medical, pedagogical and religious practices, but in all contexts "operate by organising major sites of confinement" (Deleuze, 1995: 177) such as prisons, lazarets, barracks, schools, convents, workhouses and, with the development of capitalism, firms and factories. Dean (1999: 19) notes that discipline works "over and through the individual, the body and its forces and capacities, and [involves] the composition of aggregates of human individuals (classes, armies, etc.)". Discipline, therefore, "concentrates, centres, encloses" (Foucault, cited in Elden, 2007: 565). Placing governmentality in relief with these earlier forms of power, Rose *et al.* (2006: 87) summarise:

From this moment on those who inhabited a territory were no longer understood merely as juridical subjects who must obey the laws issued by a sovereign authority nor as isolated individuals whose conduct was to be shaped and disciplined, but as existing within a dense field of relations between people and people, people and things, people and events. Government has to act upon these relations that were subject to natural processes and external pressures, and these had to be understood and administered using a whole range of strategies and tactics to secure the well-being of each and all. Authorities now addressed themselves to knowing and regulating the process proper to the population, the laws that modulated its wealth, health, and longevity, its capacity

to wage war and engage in labour, and so forth. To govern, therefore, whether to govern a household, a ship, or a population, it was necessary to know that which was to be governed, and to govern in the light of that knowledge.

Foucault discouraged an epochal understanding of these different discursive modes of power/knowledge, whereby sovereignty would be replaced by discipline and that by governmentality. Rather, he stressed that the contemporary significance of both sovereign and discipline forms of power was that “governmentality retains and utilises the techniques, rationalities and institutions” peculiar to these earlier regimes of governance, even while it “seeks to reinscribe and recode them” (Dean, 1999: 19, 20; see also Dutton, 2009; Valverde, 2007). Foucault ([1978] 1991a: 102) saw governmentality as “a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of security”.

There is a double-take involved in governmentality: on the one hand governance is extended to an increasing number of sites beyond-the-state – an association that involves both sides in incorporating, modifying and transforming their existing forms of power; and on the other hand governance is subject to the continuing influence of liberal political rationalities that, as in earlier times, act as a critical limiting factor on government. In a fundamental sense, governmentality differs from both sovereignty and discipline in that power is exercised by governing through and in accordance with the desires and wishes of individuals, rather than on, over or against those to be governed. Ted Rutland and Alex Aylett (2008: 630) contend that this

form of self-policing is put in place by creating congruence between the interests of the state and the interests of the family, group or individual. By facilitating the identification of the interests of the state with those of the individual, the state’s aims come to be internalised by those who are subject to them.

Arguing that different, overlapping and competing modes of governance co-exist in the modern state, Foucault ([1978] 1991a: 93) drew a distinction between sovereignty and ‘government’:

Government is the right disposition of things ... for Machiavelli the object and, in a sense, the target of power are two things, on the one hand the territory, and on the other its inhabitants ... sovereignty is not exercised on things, but above all on a territory and consequently on the subjects who inhabit it On the contrary ... the definition of government no way refers to territory. One governs things. But what does this mean? I do not think this is a matter of opposing things to men, but rather of showing that what government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of *complex of men and things* (emphasis added).

As a number of geographers have pointed out (Braun, 2000; Elden, 2007; Elden and Crampton, 2007; Hannah, 1993, 2000; Murdoch, 2006; Ó Tuathail, 1996; Rose-Redwood, 2006), the shift away from territoriality in government does not mean that the spatial ceases to play a critical role in the formulation and enactment of governance. The mode of governance that Foucault characterises as governmentality brings with it its own “strategy that requires a sociospatial ordering of resources and the means for their distribution and circulation” (Elden, 2007: 566).

Significance of the spatial to governance/governmentality

There are two basic and closely aligned ways in which the relations between governance and geography can be unpacked. Regimes of governance spatially envisage the objects to be governed in particular ways. Governing projects ‘take up’ objects in terms by which those objects are framed or described, according to features vital to the enactment of governmental objectives. All objects of governance require delineation from the world of which they form a part, a relational process involving both severance and attachment. Building on Law’s emphasis on practices of ‘ordering’ rather than achieved order, Thrift (2006: 144) has captured this spatial sense of governing in his description of a variety of “spatial operations: linking, contrast, separation, combination, tension, movement, alternation, oscillation”. Objects are ordered and calculated as ‘discrete’ aspects of the world (Callon, 1998); they are framed, or spatially imagined, so as to make their governance possible.

The study of how specific objects are spatially imagined will reveal the particular mentalities of rule and forms of power that are invested in attempts at ordering. An

example of such a study is Reuben Rose-Redwood's (2006) examination of house numbers and city directories as spatialised technologies of governance. Using Gearóid Ó Tuathail's (1996: 7) notion of 'geo-power' (derived from Foucault's 'biopower') – "the functioning of geographical knowledge not as an innocent body of knowledge and learning but as an ensemble of technologies of power concerned with the governmental production and management of territorial space" – Rose-Redwood was able to shed some light of how the statistical administration and management of the populations concerned were intimately tied to the geographical knowledges that linked those populations to particular territories. On that basis, Rose-Redwood (2006: 480) concluded "that the ordering of space is itself one of the requisites for producing governmental power/knowledge".

Governance is spatial in a second sense in that governmental practices and objects are mutually inter-related and constituted in and through a 'complex of men and things' brought together within particular attempts at governing. The 'doing' (practices and performances) of governmental activities links together a range of heterogeneous entities – including, for example, bodies, technologies and texts – that constitute distinct geographical orderings in, if not of, the world (Malpas, 2008). Here, the geographical resonates with the notion of the 'actor-network' that was introduced in the previous chapter. Malpas and Wickham (1995: 41) made reference to this when they noted that accounts of governance

should concentrate on the details of the 'assemblages' (the term is pointedly Latourian...) of people, organisations, things and actions which together operate to produce certain outcomes. ... Such assemblages are complex structures that are always implicated within larger assemblages and whose components may operate together in only a loosely integrated, and not entirely consistent, fashion.

In this sense, the spatiality of governmental projects will necessarily 'overflow' (Callon, 1998) the framing achieved by delineating particular objects of governance, even while those projects and objects remain mutually inter-related and constituted. To study the messy tangles, or 'mangles' (Pickering, 1995) of governance in practice is, therefore, to examine how objects of governance, conceived as spatially imagined and discrete entities, are related to enactments of government that both fail to ever completely grasp the objects

to which they are directed, and that must necessarily engage with multiple and competing assemblages that are forever overflowing the frames within which they are thought to operate.

Let me ground this discussion.

The framing of Tasmania as an object of governance, as an ‘island community’, suggests that characteristics of island and community will be among those geographical features deemed necessary to be known, acted upon and through in order to govern Tasmania and solve the ‘Tasmanian problem’. Contemporary rationalisations of governance may no longer be as boldly *laissez-faire* as that of John Stuart Mill ([1859] 1985: 69) when he asserted that if the end be ‘Liberty’ then despotism could be validated as “a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end”. Nor may these rationalisations be as imperial as that provided by the Reverend John West of Launceston ([1852] 1981: 522), when he stated that the “history of Tasmania is a type of the Australian world” and warranted ‘absolute’ British rule – “could it be otherwise? A company of exiles, overawed by dissolute soldiery, interspersed here and there with few persons of a superior class, could only be governed by despotism”. Mariana Valverde (1996: 367) has noted that liberalism’s discipline modes of power are now justified through “[c]laims about the inherent characteristics of certain spaces”, claims which, nevertheless, associate the “rule of backward peoples ... [as being] closely connected to and anchored in the rule of backward (unreasonable, immoderate) spaces” (1996: 368).

(2) Nixon’s impossible object: Tasmania as ‘island community’

The Nixon Report, 1997

Through the 1980s the Tasmanian economy accumulated high levels of government debt due to declines in the proportion of Commonwealth funding and a “burgeoning level of public sector indebtedness” (Felmingham, 2005: 424). By the end of the decade “the State was facing an unprecedented financial crisis. For most of the 1980s, Tasmania had been living well beyond its means, and by 1989 accumulated debt had risen to an unsustainable

level" (Felton, 2004: 43). While some attempts were made to address the 'crisis',⁴¹ by the mid 1990s Tasmania, on a range of economic indices, compared very unfavourably with mainland Australian states. In the early years of the 1990s "unemployment drifted 25 percentage points above the national average and wage earnings fell 20 percent short of composite national averages" (Felmingham, 2005: 424). Whereas the average increase in gross state product from mainland states had been 35 percent over the last decade, Tasmania had only recorded an increase of 13 per cent; employment growth in Tasmania was half the national average; and Tasmanian State debt, at \$1.5 billion, was still the highest per capita in Australia. A desperate economic situation was reflected in population loss as 'working-age' Tasmanians (especially the years 18-38) sought opportunities on the Australian mainland. Despite Tasmanian women having amongst the highest fertility rates in the country, demographer Natalie Jackson (2005: 25-26) noted that 64 of the 100 years since federation in 1901 were marked by net migration loss (see Beer, A. 1998). Overall, the State was seen to be 'in crisis': "Tasmanian newspapers⁴² seem to be full of story after story about a crisis in Tasmania, an economic crisis, a population crisis, a financial crisis" (Croome, 1997c: 135; see also Croome 1997a, 1997b).

In October 1996, the Liberal⁴³ Tasmanian Government and the newly elected Liberal/National Australian Government jointly commissioned an inquiry into Tasmania's economy and administration. The inquiry fulfilled a Federal campaign promise to develop a 'Tasmania package' with the aim of redressing the State's economic disadvantage. The

⁴¹ Michael Field, Labor Premier from 1989 to 1992, in partnership with five 'Green independents' (on the 'Labor/Green Accord' see Pybus and Flanagan, 1990; Haward and Larmour, 1993), instigated a "'significant change in direction' ... built upon a three-year fiscal strategy aimed at 'restraining the growth of capital spending, reducing the levels of borrowings, and constraining debt servicing costs'" (Field, cited in Felton, 2004: 44).

⁴² Reflecting the island's strong regionalism, Tasmania has three daily newspapers: *The Mercury* in the south; *The Examiner* in the north-east; and *The Advocate* in the north-west (see Tanner, 1990).

⁴³ In Australia, at both state and federal jurisdictions, government is generally formed by either of two mainstream political groupings: the centre-left Australian Labor Party or the centre-right Liberal Party (at a federal level and in some states in coalition with the closely aligned, and predominately rural, National Party). Since the 1980s the advent of environmental politics has complicated this political spectrum in Tasmania (though not the rest of Australia). The Tasmanian Greens political party (the first environmentally-based political party in the world) routinely poll around 20 per cent in State elections, and with the benefit of a preferential voting system have seen that primary vote translated into parliamentary representation. This has resulted in three 'hung parliaments' involving Greens politicians since 1989 (see Chapter 4).

inquiry was chaired by a former Federal Minister, Peter Nixon,⁴⁴ who, after consulting around the State, delivered his report in July 1997. He made the ‘Tasmanian problem’ clear in his covering letters to the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, and the Premier of Tasmania, Tony Rundle. Research, he wrote, “proves conclusively that without reform Tasmania will continue its inexorable decline” (1997: cover letter). However, he also expressed his optimism that the island community’s disadvantages could be transmuted into opportunities, calling his report “a blueprint for change that will provide Tasmanians with prospects for a prosperous future” (1997: cover letter).

Contradictions in the first few pages of the report belie those prospects. Nixon claimed that his proposed changes “reflect the views of the people of Tasmania”, yet he also predicted an “outcry against my report” (1997: preface). He held that “Tasmanians want a dynamic State where industry, education, training and good government are matched by a lifestyle which provides a beautiful, clean and pristine environment which is the envy of the nation”, while also describing “an economy with serious problems and an overwhelming inertia against taking the actions needed to achieve the opportunities which would turn the State around” (1997: ii, iv). Most strikingly, Nixon set up a tension between continuity and discontinuity in claiming that his conclusions resembled those of his predecessors. He had, he wrote, “reviewed many past reports into various aspects of the Tasmanian economy”, and they “had highlighted that a lot of the problems facing the State have persisted for over 70 years, even though many of the solutions have been proposed” (1997: v). Prefacing his report with extracts from Lockyer’s report (1926), he held that those earlier diagnoses and remedies were still salient. Finally, in observing that he was updating Callaghan’s report (1977), he argued that this earlier account of the State’s vulnerability “has been proved correct” (1997: vii). Yet Nixon also claimed discontinuity, declaring that his

⁴⁴ As a Country Party candidate, Peter Nixon was first elected to parliament in the regional seat of Gippsland (in Victoria) at the 1961 federal election. Nixon was a prominent and influential figure in the Country Party (later to become the National Party). He served in a number of ministries, including as Minister for Shipping and Transport, Minister for Transport, and Minister for Primary Industry. He retired from politics in 1983 and, amongst pursuing business interests, was a commissioner of the Australian Football League for five years. He received an Order of Australia in 1993. At the time of conducting his inquiry Nixon was not unfamiliar with the geography of Tasmanian political-economy, having received, as Minister for Transport, previous reports into domestic air (1978) and rail (1977) services in Tasmania. As the Federal Minister for Shipping and Transport, Nixon had received a report from a Tasmanian Government (1972) delegation titled: *Submission to the Commonwealth Government by the Government of Tasmania in respect of disabilities suffered because of physical isolation of Tasmania from the mainland of Australia*.

proposals “will bring security, stability and *for the first time* prospects of growth and employment opportunities for Tasmanians facing the 21st century” (1997: preface, emphasis added).⁴⁵ He did concede some scepticism over these prospects:

I have been frequently asked by Tasmanians what is different about this Inquiry? Why will it achieve the solutions for Tasmania where so many have failed in the past? Tasmanians are justified in holding this view. For over 70 years the solutions have been known, but not implemented. ... In a world of increasing competitive pressures and rapid change, Tasmania can no longer afford the easy path of inaction. The hard decisions must be taken now (1997: 2).

But in his description of an island people who simultaneously supported him and raised an outcry against him, who inertially aspired to dynamism, who traditionally resisted breaches to this tradition, and who persistently re-elected governments that, supposedly, had persistently let them down, Nixon already suggested the failure of his disciplinary and optimistic ‘solutions’ to the ‘Tasmanian problem’. He unintentionally reinforced an image of Tasmania as resistant to efforts to improve it.

Governmental ‘frictions’ were evident in Nixon’s spatial imaginary of Tasmania as an island community. Islands, according to Baldacchino (2008b: 215) are particularly subject to the requirement that they be territorially ‘indivisible’:

There are just over 85,000 islands in the world with a surface area greater than 0.1km² ... Yet remarkably, out of these (and excluding those that are either depopulated or otherwise under contestation), *only eleven* are shared (*de facto* or *de jure*) between more than one jurisdiction, and in some of these cases, not without resistance by those who would see them eventually under unitary control.

⁴⁵ Three months prior to the release of Nixon’s report, the incumbent Tasmanian Liberal ‘minority government’ led by Tony Rundle had released a *Directions Statement* which too argued for radical change: “For the plain fact is this state cannot go on as it has in the past. We must understand that we are no longer an isolated island with the luxury of insulating ourselves from what happens elsewhere” (Rundle, cited in McCall, 1997b: 434). Similarities in the content of the *Directions Statement* and *The Nixon Report* resulted in accusations that Nixon’s report was ‘political’ and hence compromised forever-after in its ability “to be used as an independent report” (Adams, 1999: n.p.). For the political context surrounding Nixon’s report see the Tasmania political chronicles by Tony McCall (1997a; 1997b; 1998a; 1998b).

For Nixon, 'island' identified the governmental territory of Tasmania, a contained 'community' that could be qualified internally and projected externally. In this sense, Nixon's governmental imaginary of island Tasmania was premised on a type of sovereignty that works by "controlling access to a territory through boundary restrictions, [such that] the content of the territory can be manipulated and its character designed" (Taylor, 1994: 151). According to Peter Taylor (1994; 1995), the linking of territory to sovereignty via governmental practices reduces and 'contains' social processes to state-centred forms. Nixon's framing of his report, however, explicitly refers to tensions of community even while he refers to Tasmania as an island community. Those effects evidently had made the island community an impossible object of governance for 70 years. One way to see the working of Nixon's self-contradicting frame of reference is through the boundedness taken to be definitive of island spatiality.

Returning to earlier discussions of islandness, islands are typically denoted as 'masses of land surrounded by water,' with the qualifier 'but smaller than a continent'. Initially, then, islandness relates to a particular concept of spatiality. Islands are founded on the elemental qualities of land and water, the clear boundary of this difference, and the separation or disjunction marked by boundedness. In a shift from a scalar qualifier to a relation of difference, islands also suggest an alterity to what they are not, the continent or mainland. There is a further complication, which both cross-cuts and amplifies these relations of disjuncture and difference. Islands usually contain other islands – for example, many 'communities' – within their spatiality, which camouflage their boundary and complicate their unity. Put another way, the 'archipelagic' nature of islands forces a repetition that disrupts the stabilised ordering of island spatiality in terms of a bounded, unified island and its 'otherness' to a continent/mainland. Another feature of the presence of islands within islands is that mobilisations of islandness also include the configuration of islands' accrued discursive associations. To mobilise the figure of island is to engage these multiple and competing mytho-histories, replete with their real and imagined actual islands. Working through the spatial relations of islandness, these associations give rise to the dichotomous tensions commonly deployed in islandness. For example, the familiar images of island as either prison or idyllic refuge *and* paradise both follow from the interplay of a disjunction (land-water) and an opposition (island-continent). The same tensions, that is,

give rise to outcomes that are both simultaneous and conflicting. Thus, evoking the figure of island is to map the relations of land-water, island-continent, and island-island, in a number of possible patterns.

In Nixon's inquiry, and those that preceded it, such discursive and spatial mappings produce contradictory and ambivalent accounts of islandness, especially in the extent to which the geographical location of Tasmania as an island is regarded as both virtue *and* vice: "Tasmania is a beautiful island" but "has suffered in the past due to its geographical isolation" (Nixon, 1997: 12, 192). Nixon made Tasmania's island status the central constraint holding Tasmania back while at the same time he proposed that islandness was a resource to be exploited. Even though this insight was more or less the inquiry's leitmotif: "while the State's beauty and tranquillity have been preserved during a period of rapid change and increasing pace in the world economy, Tasmania has failed to develop an economy which can compete effectively" (Nixon, 1997: vii), in effect, Nixon both celebrated and deplored the failure of earlier attempts at development.

A similar dissonance appears in Nixon's remarks on how Bass Strait intervenes between the mainland and the island. Although he saw this theme as deserving an entire chapter of his background report, he left the tension between the figuration of Bass Strait as medium and barrier unresolved. On one hand, his claims for Tasmania's competitive advantage as an island follow from the existence of Bass Strait as a prime means towards prosperity. On the other hand, while Nixon (1997: 45) noted that "the availability of infrastructure for transport, communications and energy is comparable with anywhere on the mainland", he also endorsed the claim by other analysts that "reform must be made in the transport sector for Tasmania to overcome the *inherent disadvantages* associated with its location" (Nixon, 1997: xii, emphasis added). In the end, Nixon (1997: 260) held that "the major cost disadvantage faced by Tasmania relates to sea transport across Bass Strait". The same dichotomous strains in Nixon's framing of Tasmania as an island are amplified further through his problematic deployment of 'community'.

Nixon used 'community' in its taken-for-granted sense of a desirable form of collectivity. In his vision of the lifestyle his recommendations would allow, he held that Tasmanian

governments must “enhance the quality of life, with work and leisure balanced producing a healthy and invigorated community which is safe, caring and engaged” (Nixon, 1997: 7). Ferdinand Tönnies ([1887] 1974) could have reminded him of how hard it is to reconcile the caring and engagement of *Gemeinschaft* (‘community’) with the *Gesellschaftlich* (‘association’ or ‘society’) logic of competitive advantage. When Nixon did encounter ‘community’ in that sense, he diagnosed it as ‘parochialism’, and implicitly treated it as the pathological obverse of the disease-free status that was one of island Tasmania’s competitive advantages. While noting the structural conditions for strong local and regional ties – 40 per cent of Tasmanians lived in localities of less than 5,000 people, compared with a national figure of 23 per cent – he saw those ties as a handicap, and held that Tasmania’s poor economic performance had:

promoted a defensive reaction within the Tasmanian community. This leads to regions competing with each other to sustain services and business, despite the need for rationalisation of such services.

Parochialism leads to the community being focused on fighting to retain services, whether economically viable or otherwise. Communities lose focus on attracting new and viable business to the detriment of the general well-being of the State. The impact of this attitude is compounded when the Government accommodates this sentiment by implementing programs aimed at benefiting regions to the detriment of the State (Nixon, 1997: 19-20).

This passage is revealing. For one thing, the referents of ‘community’ shift from the State to the local and back again, with an underlying suggestion that they *should* be the same. Then, it seems that the logic of community *should* be overridden by the logic of rationalisation. It also seems that although the logic of rationalisation *should not* extend to economic competition between regions it *should* be extended to the governance of the regions, through governments refusing to allow for local sentiments. In just those few lines, then, Nixon displayed an impossible tangle, and revealed the assumptions that underlay his recommendations.

Under Nixon’s model of strategic governance the caring and engaged ‘community’ he evoked is unrealisable (and hence ungovernable). To be sure, it is difficult to define what a

'community' is. Nicholas Abercrombie *et al.* (1988: 44) called it one of "the most elusive and vague" concepts in social science, and "largely without specific meaning". For Gyanendra Pandey (2005: 409) "community is profoundly unstable, and its uses multiple, disparate and often questionable". By 1997 the notion of community had become even more problematic, with 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) and global communication rendering less relevant the physical location, common ties and face-to-face interaction that had previously been taken as its defining features (for example, Bell and Newby, 1974). Attention to the *how* rather than to the *what* of 'community' yields greater purchase (Cohen, 1985). One means of defining community is by drawing boundaries, for there can be no 'us' without an excluded 'them'. Indeed, this is the homology of 'community' and 'islandness'. Like the natural, sea-girt, boundaries of an island, and with the same tensions of alterity, a community is enacted through a naturalised, norm-girt, sense of boundedness.

Underpinning Nixon's use of 'the Tasmanian community' as synonymous with 'the Tasmanian people', or 'Tasmanians', that link leads to the normative crossing of scale in the passage quoted above. Nixon did not note the consequences: that a 'community' achieved by exclusion contradicts the universal inclusiveness of both the liberal-democratic polity and the economic competition that his model of strategic governance took for granted. The more Nixon invoked 'community,' the more he ensured that his imaginary of governance was impossible. This "old question of liberalism's exclusions" (Valverde, 1996: 359) had been widely canvassed and yet Nixon routinely presents it with a straight face. Another instance of this slippage in his thinking is the claim that governments "have a social and economic responsibility to their *communities*, and in a democracy will be accountable to the *community* for their actions and performance" (Nixon, 1997: 11, emphasis added), to the procedural stress in his advice that the "governance system of Tasmania must allow Government to pursue its mandate from the *electorate* and be clearly accountable to the *electorate*" (Nixon, 1997: 11, 53, emphasis added).

Given the unworkability of Nixon's idea of governance, his optimism about what can be done if only Tasmania would 'modernise' is remarkable. In this, he exemplified what he ostensibly rejected. Nixon (1997: 9) had noted early in his report that:

There is no one single or simple action, or quick fix, that the Tasmanian or Commonwealth governments could instigate to remedy Tasmania's dismal economic performance and long-term economic decline. This includes the 'cargo cult' or 'field of dreams' mentality which is prevalent in the Tasmanian community, and which sees the single large project or investment as a cure for Tasmania's economic ills. This must be dismissed. This originated from Tasmania's colonial history, when the next ship from England would bring the panacea to the fledgling colony's needs.

Yet his confident forecast of what the Tasmanian community could achieve if only it embraced his 'solutions' are poignant, for they suggest nothing so much as a cargo cult of governance.⁴⁶ Tasmanians were certainly familiar with that 'field of dreams', having often heard the same promise that now, at last, this time, the 'Tasmanian problem' *can* be solved because it *must* be solved. Nixon himself had noted that most of what he recommended had already appeared in earlier reports; and each time had been briefly controversial and then largely ignored. Given the continuity identified by Nixon, I examine two inquiries he had singled out: *The Lockyer Report* of 1926, and *The Callaghan Report* of 1977.

(3) Nixon's impossible models: the Lockyer and Callaghan reports

The Lockyer Report, 1926

In January 1926 Sir Nicholas Lockyer⁴⁷ was commissioned by the Australian Government to inquire into Tasmania's finances amid a mounting sense that the State had not derived

⁴⁶ Nixon (1997: 11) envisaged that the role of government was "steering the ship of state". Peter Pels (1997: 174) has noted that "metaphors of the ship and the island helped to shift the notion of economy from family relationships to the more abstract concept of population, a development that is the major marker of the new discourse on government". Nixon's 'statist' (McCall, 1997b) and "economic rationalist 'solutions' to Tasmania's problems" (Richardson, 1997b: 70) comprised a mix of privatisation, minimal government, and market mechanisms. Some specific recommendations included: selling significant State assets in order to pay back debt, noteworthy here are the Hydro-Electric Commission, the 'Spirit of Tasmania' passenger ferry, and various Port Corporations, along with a suite of other government business enterprises; reducing government in the name of administrative efficiency and to solve the problem of 'over-representation', involving radical parliamentary reform (halving the number of politicians from 54 to 27 and creating a unicameral parliament), fewer local councils (from 29 to 10), and reducing government departments (13 to 7); and the encouragement of 'competition' by various means, such as extending shop-trading hours and reducing payroll, land and power taxes. As McCall (1997b: 439) noted, "[t]o label the NR [*The Nixon Report*] as a purely economic rationalist 'scorched-earth' approach to regional development is to miss entirely the role of government within this debate".

⁴⁷ Lockyer was a career public servant. From 1870 he worked for the Treasury Department of New South Wales and following federation joined the Commonwealth Public Service where he held a number of positions dealing especially with customs and commerce. McDonald (1986: n.p.) asserts that Lockyer was "an impressive,

the benefits its people had expected when voting for federation (May, 1968). Although Tasmania had recorded the highest yes-vote⁴⁸ (Warden, 1999) among the colonies that formed the Commonwealth of Australia, twenty years later it was apparent that its long-term decline relative to the other states was continuing (Brigden, 1927). Newspapers in the north of the island were proposing Tasmania's "absorption into Victoria" (Robson, 1991: 395). Economic stagnation had its origins as far back as the 1840s (Robson and Roe, 1997; Boyce, 2008), and had been only briefly interrupted by events such as the discovery of gold in Victoria in the 1850s and Tasmania's own mining boom of the 1870s and 1880s (Blainey, 1959; Haygarth, 2003; Robson, 1991; Townsley, 1953). The Victorian gold rush was itself a mixed blessing for Tasmania; providing a proximate market for produce from settlements in the north, but also accelerating the exodus of its 'young men' who, since the mid 1830s, had begun to seek their fortune on the mainland, "leaving behind deserted farms and shuttered shops" (Blainey, 1959: 4). The "steady stream of defectors" (Haygarth, 2003: 78) from the island resulted in declining population levels: in "1842 there were 41,000 adult males in the colony; in 1852, only 25,000; in 1854, 22,000; and by 1862 the figure had shrunk to little more than 20,000" (Robson, 1991: 37).

The years that preceded the granting of self-government in 1856 had been relatively buoyant, notwithstanding the end of transportation in 1853 and the consequent loss of "Britain's maintenance payment for transported convicts" (Haygarth, 2003: 78). Self-government came with a morale-boosting change of name from Van Diemen's Land to Tasmania. Within a decade, however, self-governing ebullience had been replaced by economic despondency (Townsley, 1955; Reynolds, 1969b), as the "sanguine expectations of the 1850s gave way to more realistic expectations in the 1860s, caused by the declining status of the two staples [wheat and wool] which had explained the rapid transition from

disciplined figure who, despite pince-nez and drawling accent, was credited with the 'penetrating power of a hundred-ton gun'". Robson (1991: 395) notes that 'special investigator' Lockyer was "the first of a series of men who reported adversely on Tasmania's finances in the 1920s".

⁴⁸ At an initial plebiscite in June 1898 Tasmanians were on a par with Victorians in voting overwhelmingly for federation, recording a majority of 11,797 to 2,716 (MacKirdy, 1954: 27), with support strongest in the north of the island. However, both Queensland and Western Australia abstained (Murphy, 1982), and while majorities in favour of union were achieved in the states that did participate (Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales), the 71,595 'Yes' votes cast in the critical state of New South Wales fell short of a self-imposed minimum of 80,000. By the time a second referendum was held in 1899, the number of Tasmanians opposed to federation "had dwindled to a tiny 791 votes" (Robson and Roe, 1997: 69).

command to free economy in the first half of the nineteenth century” (Felmingham, 2005: 421).⁴⁹ Successive attempts by the thirty-member House of Assembly to place the colony on sound financial footing by, among other proposals, replacing *ad valorem* duties with property and income tax measures were blocked as ‘odiously inquisitorial’ (Robson, 1991) by landed-gentry interests, in particular the men who dominated the restricted franchise of that “superb period piece” (Boyce, 1970: 79), the fourteen-member Legislative Council.⁵⁰ With the economic situation of Tasmania increasingly ‘desperate’ one commentator outlined the problem, “falling revenue, a stagnant population and declining trade,” and proposed a solution, “Tasmania should permit protectionist Victoria to annex it” (cited in Robson 1991: 48). Visiting Tasmania in 1873 Anthony Trollope ([1873] 1967: 487-8) diagnosed a general malaise:

It seems hard to say of a new colony, not yet seventy years old, that it has seen the best of its days, and that it is falling into decay, that its short period of importance in the world is already gone, and that for the future it must exist, - as many an old town and old country do exist, - not exactly on the memory of the past, but on the relics which the past has left behind it ... I by no means say that the dreamy, dusty quiescence of decay, the imbecility of old age which does not become actual death because so little of the energy of life is expended on the work of living from day to day, have become the lot of young Tasmania; but I do say that Tasmanians are almost united in declaring so of themselves, and that they have said so till the other colonies are quite united in repeating the story.

⁴⁹ Although Reynolds (citing Rimmer, 1965) noted divergent effects of ‘the long depression of 1856-75’: “Sheep raising was the only industry relatively unaffected by depression and wool achieved a position of unprecedented importance. Its share of export earnings jumped from 27 per cent in the fifties to 41 per cent in the sixties and fell only slightly to 39 per cent in the seventies. ‘Depression ... everybody else’s depression that is, was a necessary condition of the pastoralists’ success’” (Reynolds, 1969b: 63).

⁵⁰ Franchise restrictions, principally gendered and then relating to ownership of property, were such that in 1870, out of a total colonial population of around 100,000, a mere 2,797 voters qualified for the Legislative Council, and 14,036 appeared on the roll for the House of Assembly. Additionally, reforms that year strengthened the well-established practice of permitting multiple votes based upon wealth. Robson (1991: 54) recounts that during the election of 1871, the electorate of Hobart having been divided into five separate districts, “217 persons could vote twice, 70 could vote three times, 28 four times and 4 could cast a full five votes each”. Franchise restrictions based on gender, wealth, property and income were dropped in the early years of federation (1903 and 1906) and “those who hitherto had been politically despised and pitied were able to exercise their democratic rights” (Warden, 1999: 214).

As early as 1873, Tasmanians were already expressing feelings of being neglected, abandoned and ignored. While other colonies on the mainland forged ahead, rapidly re-inventing themselves as modern colonies, Tasmania, alone, was left without a new persona to replace the memories of its shameful past as an island-prison for the British Empire's worst offenders (Roe, 2001). Coming on the heels of the 1890s depression, Federation⁵¹ presented an opportunity to reverse the situation and "enable the formerly despondent Islanders to realise that they are the equals of their fellow-Australians" (Nicholls, 1913: 358; see also Walker, 1973: 221; Warden, 1999). That desire found its location in a mix of lofty idealism and economic reality. One speaker popular at meetings held in support of the 'Yes' vote argued the benefits of federation to Tasmanians in the following terms:

Gentlemen, if you vote for the Bill you will found a great and glorious nation under the bright Southern Cross, and meat will be cheaper; and you will live to see the Australian race dominate the Southern seas, and you will have a market for both potatoes and apples; and your sons shall reap the grand heritage of nationhood (Anon, cited in Nicholls, 1913: 356).

Having entered into Federation "not only [for] something like an equality of wealth with the richer mainland, but also [with the] hope of deeper regeneration" (Roe, 2001: 23), twenty years later the Tasmanian government and various interest groups set about preparing submissions detailing the ill-effects of having joined the Commonwealth (Boyce, 1973, 2000; May, 1968). A report prepared in 1910 by Robert Johnston, the Tasmanian Government statistician, found that the effects of Federation had been particularly severe for Tasmania (as he had predicted in 1891). Political analyst R.J. May (1968: 392) concluded: "In the process of political and economic integration which followed federation, Tasmania suffered".⁵² Heather Felton (2004: 28) detailed the main effects as follows:

⁵¹ An earlier attempt at forming an Australian commercial federation had been initiated by Tasmania keen to remove the crippling effects of colonial customs duties and tariffs. However, in 1870 at an inter-colonial conference, Victoria scuttled proceedings by refusing to countenance the possibility of revising its protectionist policies (Robson, 1991).

⁵² Peter Boyce (2000: 192) offers an account which balances economic and political effects: "the century's span of economic history has certainly offered grounds for questioning the benefits of federation to Tasmania, but the more subtle processes of political integration and the strengthening of national identity, though less measurable, are also significant elements in any cost-benefit analysis".

The cost to taxpayers of government services and functions decreased as a state's population increased. This [trend] meant that Tasmania, with the smallest population, was making the greatest sacrifice in the cause of federation. Tasmania received only 2.1 per cent of the federal reimbursement while contributing 4.2 per cent to federal revenue. In Tasmania, state taxes had increased by 153 per cent since federation, whereas in New South Wales state taxes had fallen by 12 per cent.

The causes of Tasmania's long-term economic decline were multiple, and included such global phenomena as the 1840s and 1890s world depressions and the collapse of the world commodity market in 1921. By the 1920s "all kinds of extra-parliamentary organisations started up, convinced that even if the State had not been deliberately swindled by federation, it was now being robbed blind" (Robson, 1991: 396). During this period some Tasmanians, including Premier Joseph Lyons,⁵³ went as far as threatening to secede from the Commonwealth. Lockyer's inquiry was part of the Commonwealth's response to Tasmania's statements of grievance. Lockyer (1926: 24) granted the justice of Tasmanians' sense of relative decline, noting that:

There can be no doubt whatever that the financial position of Tasmania is one of serious moment and calls for immediate attention. Without substantial assistance from the Commonwealth ... it will be quite impossible, in my opinion, to stem the exodus of population, which has reached alarming proportions, and if permitted to continue will surely lead to the bankruptcy of the State, a possible contingency of vital importance to the whole of the Commonwealth.

⁵³ Joseph Lyons was Premier of Tasmania from 1923 to 1928, and later become Prime Minister of Australia. In that capacity Lyons was instrumental in setting up, along with another Tasmanian, the economist/statistician Lyndhurst Giblin, the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) in July 1933, specifically under threat of Western Australian secession and long-running Tasmanian expressions of injustice (May, 1968; Mathews, 1977; McLean, 2004). The CGC came about as a means to effect horizontal fiscal equalisation (HFE) to counter "high vertical fiscal imbalance" (McLean, 2004:21) created under, but not by federation (Mathews, 1975: 67). "A distinctive feature of Australian federalism" (Maude, 2004: 5), HFE involves the redistribution of Commonwealth collected moneys from more populous and richer states, such as Victoria and New South Wales, to less populous and poorer states, such as South Australia and Tasmania. As Iain McLean (2004:22) notes of the background history to the instigation of the CGC: "The first Commonwealth party labels were Protection and Free Trade. The free-trading outliers were Western Australia (WA) and Tasmania. As remote primary producers with little import-substituting domestic industry, they lost out twice over from the switch from State to Australia-wide tariffs [associated with federation]. They faced tariffs on their inputs and did not benefit from tariff protection for their outputs".

Yet Lockyer rejected the Tasmanian Government's bid to the Commonwealth – made in *The Case for Tasmania* – for a special annual grant of £545,000 to be paid for ten years, on the disciplinary grounds that such 'excessive' assistance would lift the incentive for change. Instead, Lockyer recommended an alternative form of assistance, to come with stringent conditions for the "thorough reform of its financial administration", and so encourage "definite action of the part of the State to put its own house in order" (1926: 5, 24). Lockyer (1926: 24) advised the good sense of "effecting all possible economies and the avoidance of wasteful, as well as speculative, expenditure in connexion with private enterprises and in other dimensions".

My concern here, however, is not with the details of the recommendations that Lockyer advanced, but with the report's constructions of 'island' and 'community' and their use in the inquiry to frame Tasmania as an object of governance. 'Islandness' was certainly an issue in Tasmania's objection to the *Navigation Act* (1921). Restricting, *inter alia*, interstate trade to Australian ships, the effect of the Act was to drive up the cost of shipping, and Tasmanians keenly felt that they were paying disproportionately for a national benefit. Complaints about the perceived inequity and deleterious impact of the *Navigation Act* characterised relations with the Commonwealth throughout the 1920s. L.T. Broinowski, journalist with *The Mercury*, insisted that the workings of the *Navigation Act* left Tasmania "neglected and humiliated" (cited in Robson, 1991: 396): he felt aggrieved enough to later contest the federal seat of Denison under the banner of 'Tasmania First'. The President of the Hobart Chamber of Commerce, M.L. Susman, damned the Act as a "loathsome measure", and the Chamber, in 1925, "resolved unanimously to bind all Tasmanian members of the federal parliament to fight abolition of the coastal clauses of the *Navigation Act*, irrespective of party politics" (cited in Robson, 1991: 398). Sir Henry Jones, a prominent merchant and the owner of a jam factory, headed a delegation of concerned businessmen bound for Melbourne, then still the seat of Commonwealth government. To Tasmanians, the *Navigation Act* was "beggar[ing] the state" and "destroy[ing] the spirit of one of the basic principles of federation, which was that there be no discrimination between states" (Robson, 1991: 396, 397). As an island jurisdiction, Tasmania was certainly more dependent than the other Australian states on sea transport. Figures quoted by Lockyer (1926) showed that in 1923-24 the interstate sea trade of the mainland States

amounted to 2.1 tons per head of population, while that of Tasmania was 5.06 tons per head. Lockyer (1926: 23) nonetheless concluded that “the effect of the *Navigation Act* on the prosperity of Tasmania has not been nearly so detrimental as is popularly believed,” though it “has been, and is, a factor in retarding the progress of the island”. That seemed to justify the sense expressed by Tasmanians of being “treated most unfairly by an uncaring federal government” (Robson, 1991: 397), and contributed to the establishment of Bass Strait as marking the island-state’s alterity to mainland Australia.

Insofar as Lockyer considered the notion of ‘community’ at all, it was through the now-familiar question of population (Foucault, [1978] 1991a). When he did use the word, ‘community’ had the taken-for-grantedness of the following remark about the State’s primary industry: “It is impossible to believe there will not be a prosperous agricultural community in Tasmania in the near future, if stimulus be afforded in an earnest effort to demonstrate the profitable results which will follow intensive and efficient cultural methods” (Lockyer, 1926: 16). Rather, the Commissioner referred to Tasmanians *en masse*. That this mass was steadily decreasing as a percentage of the national population was seen to represent a serious economic problem in itself. The “very regrettable serious annual loss of population” was the “most convincing evidence” of Tasmania’s economic woes, making it “less possible for the State each year to meet the common requirements of Government” (Lockyer, 1926: 24).

Taking these ‘common requirements’ to be economic, Lockyer diagnosed flaws in the governance of Tasmania. Noting that government support for the Electrolytic Zinc Company had benefited the State, he perceived “a singular want of wisdom and foresight in committing the State to the supply of electrical power at under cost price for a period of 40 years” (Lockyer, 1926: 8).⁵⁴ He expressed similar reservations with regard to requests for government aid in the establishment of a wood pulp and paper industry:

⁵⁴ A much-discussed feature of Tasmanian dreams of modernity was the hope, sustained throughout the twentieth century, that the island could overcome its inherent locational disadvantages which attended physical isolation by means of providing cheap hydro-electric power (see, for example, Dallas, 1959; Shipway, 2003). R.J. Solomon (1963: 56) reports that since “the first World War it has been the practice of the Tasmanian Government (through the monolithic Hydro-Electric Commission) to offer long-term bulk power contracts to desirable industries. Some heavier power users obtained such favourable rates on long-term that payments have been voluntarily increased to make realistic their relationship with rising costs of power production. Even

It is easy to appreciate the anxiety of the Government to aid in the establishment of an industry which may prove of very great benefit to the State, but the enterprise is one of a purely speculative character, and if the prospects are so good as is maintained by the promoters, there should be no need for such a guarantee as that mentioned. Should the guarantee receive the sanction of Parliament, the name of the State obviously will be used for the purpose of enticing investors on the ground that the enterprise has the approval and guarantee of the Government, and should it fail, it is obvious that the good name of the State will seriously suffer (Lockyer, 1926: 12).

More generally, Lockyer (1926: 12) held that “in no single instance has the State of Tasmania hitherto extended financial assistance to any speculative enterprise without involving itself in serious financial loss”.⁵⁵ He did concede that governments faced political pressures from the people they governed – the ‘community’. For example, in discussing the railways that were a significant drain on the State’s budget, Lockyer (1926: 6) observed that since

the commencement of my inquiry the Government has announced that it is proposed to close at least two non-paying lines, to dispose of the assets connected therewith, and to make the loss of capital a charge against the Consolidated Revenue, spread over a number of years. Although the construction and continuance of the lines in question may be only described as acts of folly, the Government announcement has been followed by public protests and adverse criticism, and this I fear may be anticipated with every effort made to place the State finances on a sounder basis.

so, rates as low as ½d. per unit operate (cf. basic domestic rate of 2.3d.)”. The advent of hydro-electric power in the early decades of the twentieth century certainly facilitated the establishment of a number of large industries in Tasmania: “Electrolytic Zinc (1916), Cadburys (1920), Kelsall and Kemp (1920), Patons and Baldwins (1922), Australian Newsprint Mills (1930s), Associated Pulp and Paper Manufacturers (1936), Comalco (1955), Temco (1960s)” (Felmingham, 2005: 423). K.M. Dallas (1949: 123) noted that “not far from half the power harnessed in the State is used in the cell-room of the [Electrolytic Zinc] plant”. Felmingham (2005: 423) goes on to note that these “industries developed as the export core of the Tasmanian economy in modern times, and accounted for 65 percent of the value of all exports in 2002-03, the other major export commodities being processed foods and fine merino wool”.

⁵⁵ Some remarkable parallels are to be seen between the schemes and solutions proposed then, and those that have continued to be raised in and for Tasmania, especially around governmental support for Tasmanian forestry industries and railways.

Lockyer (1926: 4) not only linked Tasmania's financial woes to the demands of various local interest groups,⁵⁶ he also framed those demands in the context of the difficulties presented by the "physical conditions of the island", and in particular referred to the requirements for the movement of people and goods, both internally amongst the various small settlements dotted around the island, and externally "by reason of her isolated position, her dependence upon interstate trade and interstate tourist traffic" (Lockyer, 1926: 23). In an accounting of State debt he produced figures showing the combined cost of railways, roads, bridges, jetties and harbours as the overwhelming component,⁵⁷ and concluded

it is claimed that the greater proportion has been incurred in an effort to promote settlement, by additional facilities of communication by rail and road, in order to develop the resources of the State. There was an expectation of a sure and steady increase of the population. This anticipation, unfortunately, has not been realised (Lockyer, 1926: 4).

Deciding that an over-responsive government had further compounded Tasmania's 'handicaps' – a complicated internal geography, separation from the mainland by Bass Strait, and the loss of its "more valuable manhood" through outmigration (Lockyer, 1926: 22) – the Commissioner nonetheless looked to government for future solutions. Proper governance – geared to the exploitation of natural resources – would allow the State to benefit from its advantages: "Tasmania is a beautiful country, and, though possessing much waste land, is rich in potential natural resources, much of which remain to be exploited" (Lockyer, 1926: 24).

⁵⁶ For example, Lockyer (1926: 9-10) writes: "It has been the practice of the Tasmanian Government to float loans on behalf of public bodies, such as Harbour Trusts, Municipalities, Cemetery Trusts ... In another case a Bill was submitted to the Legislature by a private member for the purpose of authorising the State to raise a loan of £2,000 for the purpose of purchasing land and constructing a bowling green, tennis court and croquet lawn in the constituency in the which the mover of the Bill was interested. Fortunately the Bill was rejected".

⁵⁷ According to Lockyer (1926: 4) "82.9 per cent of the total Loan Expenditure" can be accounted for by: railways (£6,885,977); roads, bridges, jetties, harbours &c. (£5,698,114); hydro-electric works (£3,287,033); returned soldier settlement (£2,581,596) and loans to public bodies (£1,531,370). Lockyer quotes a submission made by the State government in *The Case for Tasmania*: "The expenditure on Roads, &c., which return practically no revenue, has been £26 3s. 0d. per head for Tasmania, as compared with an average of £8 12s. 11d. for the five other States" (Lockyer, 1926: 6). Island governments, despite administering a small land area, seem propelled to facilitate internal circulation and movement by building roads and railways. Island novels, such as Tasmanian Richard Flanagan's (2001a) *Gould's Book of Fish* (see Shipway, 2003) and Newfoundlander Wayne Johnston's (2000b) *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, both tell stories where island governors' dream of railways. Baldacchino (2008c) provides an analysis of the inappropriateness of, though attraction for, railways on islands.

The Callaghan Report, 1977

That was Sir Bede Callaghan's⁵⁸ (1977: 3) starting-point when, fifty years later, he made his own inquiry: "Tasmania is beautiful. Tasmania is tranquil. Tasmania is economically vulnerable". It seems that not much had changed in the interim.⁵⁹ Callaghan's interpretation of Tasmania's situation certainly resembled Lockyer's diagnosis. Tasmania was again requesting urgent and special Commonwealth assistance and Tasmanians, notwithstanding the economic 'golden age' from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s (Felmingham, 2005), were again displaying a sense of grievance at their State's decline relative to the other states. But one change was evident. Whereas Lockyer had left the link between 'islandness' and 'community' implicit, Callaghan made this link explicit. That link was present in Callaghan's (1977: 1) terms of reference, for he was asked by Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser to examine both the "inherent advantages and disabilities of Tasmanian industry, including ... separation from the Australian mainland and its consequences" and "the social and community implications of any changes in the structure of industry in Tasmania which may, for economic reasons, seem to be desirable". It had been impressed upon Callaghan "that there was a degree of urgency about the need for the inquiry" (1977: 1). His task was to "provide a broad overview of the situation" however it was, as he observed, not a stand-alone inquiry, but one of "a number of inquiries [that] have been carried out in recent years or are currently underway" (1977: 2). After broad consultation around the State with various governmental, non-governmental and private organisations, including public hearings "held at all major regional centres in Tasmania" (1977: 2), Callaghan delivered his findings.

⁵⁸ Callaghan had a distinguished career in banking, services to which were the reason for his knighthood in 1976. Callaghan was first General Manager (1959 to 1965) and then Managing Director (1965 to 1976) of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. After retiring from finance he served as Chancellor of the University of Newcastle (1977 to 1988), returning to his home town of Newcastle, New South Wales. During his career he also held positions as Chairman of the Foreign Investment Review Board and Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

⁵⁹ One obvious change was the size of the three inquiries: Lockyer completed his in a miserly 26 pages, small enough to see it reproduced in full in *The Mercury* newspaper when released; Callaghan's report came in just under 200 pages; while for Nixon two volumes were required. Volume 1, containing *The Nixon Report* and *The Background Report*, totalled 551 pages. Volume 2 contained nine appendices, one of which was a reprint of Lockyer's inquiry.

Callaghan (1977: 3) began with the familiar dichotomy of vice and virtue: “The major disability facing the people of Tasmania (although some residents may consider it an advantage) is that Tasmania is an island”. He expressed the conviction that islands and lack of development went together, forewarning that “Tasmania is heading towards another Newfoundland or Ireland situation,” though he conceded that the island’s “relative rate of economic decline has been moderated by what might be called the political muscle the State gained through Federation” (1977: 103).⁶⁰ For the most part he stressed the disabilities of islandness, seeing the “characteristics of what is loosely termed the ‘Tasmanian Problem’” (1977: 94) as stemming from it: “Stated simply, Tasmania’s major problem is that it is an island State” (1977: 7); and, “[s]tated simply, Tasmania’s major problem is Bass Strait” (1977: 97). He listed the economic consequences of this geography, which ranged from transport costs to production delays caused by the non-availability of goods and services (1977: 8). Even tourism, an increasing mainstay of island economies, was hamstrung by “complications arising from separation from the mainland”. Problems with accessibility and negative perceptions of Tasmania’s climate “make Tasmania (compared with mainland States) difficult to promote with full effectiveness” (1977: 50). Like Lockyer before and Nixon after him, Callaghan (1977: 97) granted that Bass Strait also protected Tasmanian enterprises, so far as the local market was concerned, though “this comes nowhere near compensating for the disability faced by exporters”. Acknowledging that some of these difficulties were also faced by remote localities on the mainland Callaghan (1977: 11) still held that “the fact that the State of Tasmania is an island” warranted Tasmanians being “considered with more than normal sympathy” by regulators.

These diagnoses and prescriptions were pervaded by recognition that Tasmanians did not live by bread alone. The advantages of a Tasmanian lifestyle were clear in the issue of wages and salaries. Although employed Tasmanians earned less than workers in other States, they also enjoyed such benefits as easy commuting, a divorce rate below the national average, a relatively low rate of crimes against property and persons, a higher

⁶⁰ As an original member State of Australian Federation, Tasmania is guaranteed five House of Assembly Representative seats. The principal development here, noted above, was the formation of the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC). The CGC continues today in its capacity as the means by which to redistribute Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue from the Commonwealth to the States and Territories.

standard in health and welfare services, and the amenity of a beautiful environment (Callaghan, 1977). While noting that Bass Strait did create difficulties for those wanting to visit relatives on the mainland, Callaghan (1977: 78, 104) thought that on balance Tasmanians “enjoy a more relaxed pace of life, and in many respects better government services, which appeal to many but not all. They compensate or go a long way towards compensating for the lower levels of income and employment in the State [and crucially he held that] the advantages of the State include many non-economic aspects arising from geographic features”. Indeed, for Callaghan (1977: 78), some of these benefits “are only possible with the smaller population and lower economic activity that Tasmania has at present”.

Despite that assessment, Callaghan saw Tasmania’s small population as a problem. Repeating Lockyer’s observation that migration from Tasmania to other States had been significant since the 1880s, Callaghan stressed the economic effects: a smaller scale of business, a reduced demand for goods, and a narrower range of available services and life styles. Those effects added to the outflow of population. Interestingly, Callaghan took a less gloomy view than most of the interstate migration of young Tasmanians, treating it as almost inevitable. But as an outsider Callaghan could not be expected to share Tasmanians’ sense of loss at the migration of their young people, nor sympathise with the consequent loss of ‘community’ it commonly denotes (Easthope, 2007; Gabriel, 2002).

Like Nixon 20 years later, Callaghan was baffled by the pronounced local, regional and communal attachments he found among members of the population, the smallest and least centralised of any Australian State: “the distinctions drawn between the main regions, and the reasons given for those distinctions, are not easy for a non-Tasmanian to comprehend when the question of the optimal strategy for the future is discussed” (Callaghan, 1977: 13). He contended at the start of his report that he would “not examine in detail the problems of regions within Tasmania” (1977: 4) yet throughout the report he returned often to the economic irrationality of “parochial loyalties” (1977: 4, 73), as when lamenting the idea that “Tasmanian skilled labour is said to be generally immobile and industrial problems have occurred when attempts have been made to import labour to service large injections of construction work” (1977: 53). One of Callaghan’s (1977: 72) main proposals was that the

State would be best served by a more centralised industry, despite the effects that would have on the many “smaller communities [that] are largely dependent on a single major employer”. Such “heavily decentralised community groups ... [were a ‘problem’ adding to the] relatively high per capita costs of government” (Callaghan, 1977: 117). Local ties were perceived as anachronistic in that they did not “result from a conscious community choice in the context of today’s technology in the fields of communications and transport, and of economics in general” (1977: 14).

Although Callaghan (1977: 11) admitted that he had no “mandate to examine the style and quality of public administration in Tasmania” that did not stop him adverting to it, and in terms of both island and community. While Tasmania’s island status and relatively small geographic and demographic size might be seen as making it more amenable than the larger States to governmental co-ordination, he saw the State as over-governed and under-coordinated. Its administrative problems were, Callaghan (1977: 12) thought, “caused mainly by the decentralised communities, the small revenue base and the desire to hold government services to the community in line with those provided by the governments of the larger and growing States”. All in all, Callaghan appears to have seen his job as the identification of problems, not the proposing of solutions. He came down against the Australian Government supporting job-creation schemes in local communities, “I cannot support the Tasmanian proposal as put and I cannot suggest workable alternatives” (Callaghan, 1977: 73), and so he set the issue aside. In general, and against his own assessment of Tasmania’s ‘parochial’ communities, Callaghan (1977: 78, 78, 103) maintained that the “citizens of today need to think of the future” since this “effort must come from the grass roots,” and “Tasmania’s future depends to a large extent on choices which should be made by the community”. Given his suggestion that ‘the community’ is itself the problem, it is not surprising that his vision for the State was bleak. In fact, Callaghan (1977: 102) expected Tasmania to “continue its historical (economic) decline, relative to the rest of Australia. If appropriate action is taken, however, especially by the people of Tasmania and their Government, this need not involve absolute decline”.

It may be relevant to the status of the inquiry that Callaghan often seemed less interested in Tasmania as such than in its diagnostic value for the country at large. It was “because

Tasmania is an island” that he “found it easier to define [there] ... some of the current problems that bedevil Australia” (Callaghan, 1977: 94). The problems arose from what would later be called globalisation: “New questions have arisen; new power structures have emerged; the problems of tomorrow could be unrecognisable alongside the problems of yester-year” (Callaghan, 1977: 123). But if the island-State is indicative of the state of the island-continent,⁶¹ the fact that Callaghan echoed Lockyer and was in turn echoed by Nixon showed that Tasmanians do find ‘the problems of tomorrow’ easily recognisable as ‘the problems of yester-year’. That is the effect of the tensions intrinsic to governance being amplified through ‘islandness’ and ‘community’.

Conclusion

Nixon, Lockyer and Callaghan shared views of the goals and the mechanisms of governance that are broadly similar. All three took up the aetiological task of investigating Tasmania’s ills and of finding ways to treat them through governmental intervention and ‘reform’: such as the modification of Tasmania’s administrative and governmental structures, change in the State’s economy and infrastructure, change in community structures and initiatives. Interestingly, although each of these reports was set within governmental ambitions, and established through governmental interventions, they met the same fate. Each came to be regarded as something of a governmental problem in itself, each was unpalatable to the State Government of its day, and each evoked such widespread opposition that few of the proposals were enacted. For example, of the reception of Sir Nicholas Lockyer’s inquiry *The Mercury* newspaper (Tuesday 20th April, 1926)⁶² reported:

The Premier (Hon. J.A. Lyons) said yesterday that he was astounded on reading the report to find how completely the case put forward by the Government and by organisation of business men had been ignored by Sir Nicholas Lockyer. Mr. Lyons

⁶¹ A similar assessment of the predictive possibilities of the island-state as a microcosm of the island-continent was evident when Humphrey McQueen (1982: 100) analysed a likely decline in Australia’s manufacturing industry: “The existence of a ‘Tasmanian problem’ was recognised long before many of its causes and effects could be related to an ‘Australian problem’”. Of that use of the island as a laboratory, Roe (1988: 5) comments “there is a sense that insofar as Tasmania is ‘different’, it is so in accentuating broader trends, making their implications all the clearer for the world to see”.

⁶² May (1968: 382) noted a strong north-south axis in the reception of Lockyer’s inquiry, with Launceston newspapers (seen as more ‘business-oriented’ than the south) generally favourable.

said that acceptance of assistance on the lines proposed by Sir Nicholas Lockyer would reduce Tasmania to the position of a State vassal to the Commonwealth without giving adequate substantial relief to the Treasurer and to the taxpayers.

Seventy years later, *The Mercury* reported on 'Nixon's Medicine' as "a radical and far-reaching prescription 'for curing Tasmania's ills'" (cited in McCall, 1997b: 438). According to Tony McCall (1997b: 439), "prior to the release of the report there was little empirical evidence to suggest that Tasmanians either endorse or are ready to embrace the mantra for radical change proclaimed by *The Nixon Report*". By the time McCall (1998b: 610) wrote the State political chronicle for January to June 1998 he could already refer to the "seemingly forgotten *Nixon Report*" and he detailed a number of arenas within which the incumbent Liberal Government was proving highly unpopular in its 'response' to Nixon's recommendations.⁶³

According to their own terms, then, all three reports failed. This failure stemmed from the theme common to them all, Tasmania's islandness which was unique to the State, and to which the reports ascribed advantage and disadvantage (virtue and vice). Lockyer, Callaghan and Nixon held that the 'Tasmanian problem' arose from, or was intimately connected to, Tasmania's status as an island state, though each, to varying degrees, extolled some aspects of Tasmania's islandness. The identification of the 'island state' in terms of its separation from the 'mainland', its distinctive regionality, and close-knit community was central to the conception of Tasmania in the reports. It so happens that Tasmanians characterise and identify themselves through exactly those features that, to Nixon, Callaghan and Lockyer, made Tasmania a unique 'problem' among Australian states. If

⁶³ For example, the politically left-leaning Evatt Foundation (Sheil, 1997: 263) described *The Nixon Report* as a "worn raft of right-wing recommendations about the further managerialism and privatisation of the Tasmanian public sector [that] appears strikingly naive and out of time, not only because so many of these policies have already been tried and failed in Tasmania, as elsewhere, but particularly in view of the report's failure to rigorously assess the social costs and benefits of both the proposals and the prospective debt reduction". Christopher Sheil (1997: 264) went on: "the Nixon report uncritically or tendentiously proceeded from two unfortunate premises. The first was the idiosyncratic enlistment of the famously unpopular report on Tasmania's claims for financial assistance prepared by Sir Nicholas Lockyer in 1926. The Nixon report wildly asserted, and it has been constantly repeated in Tasmania ever since, that there is some sort of straight historical line between Tasmania's unfortunate present circumstances and those of 1926, when Lockyer investigations arose because of the imminent expiration of the grants awarded to Tasmania as a by-product of the formation of the Commonwealth". The second premise Sheil (1997: 265) considered was the "inward looking assumption" reflected in an "ideology of individual responsibility and self help" that "Tasmania needs to solve its own problems" (Nixon, 1997: 9).

Tasmania is the 'island state', it was also, *ipso facto*, the 'problem state'. As an object for attempts at governmental control, Tasmania is conceived in the reports in a way that renders it beyond such control. The very identification of it as the object of the three inquiries already spells the impossibility of the objectives being achieved, not least in terms of the enacting of their recommendations, but also, and more strongly, in terms of the writers being able to couch those recommendations coherently. The reports are predicated on the prior identification of Tasmania as resistant to efforts to govern it, and on Tasmania's islandness as both definitive of Tasmania and the main source of this resistance. Tasmania is an island community, but Nixon's implicit conclusion, like Lockyer's and Callaghan's before his, was that its islandness must be overcome. In other words, if economic decline is to be averted, Tasmania must find ways to cease to be what it is.

The problematic character of 'islandness' finds its echo in the problematic character of 'community'; for this, too, proved both an impetus for the three inquiries and a barrier to the responses envisaged in them. As well as meaning 'common ownership', 'common agreement', 'the quality of appertaining to all in common', 'community' means 'a body of people organised into a political, municipal, or social unity', 'living together' in 'neighbourhoods' (*OED*). The awkward back-stepping from commonality to sectarian identity corresponds to the conjunction of boundedness (and unity) and separation (from the mainland) in the meaning of 'island'. In the second sense 'community' must always present a barrier to the encompassing ideal of governance. Moreover, the intersection of tensions in islandness with those in community set up extra patterns of resistance and interference, for Tasmania's islandness seems to establish it as a tightly bounded, necessarily coherent and well-defined community even as it intensifies the factors fragmenting that community. The heightening of 'community' within the bounds of the island results in community becoming a marker of Tasmanians' inertia in the face of the perceived need for reform, and of the state's inability to enact decisions perceived as crucial. Although the reports were meant to serve the Tasmanian community, the community itself guaranteed the failure of the reports' recommendations, through resistance to the diagnoses that saw place and people as the problem to be solved. The 'island-determined' character of community was part of the 'Tasmanian problem'.

In these respects, then, the Lockyer, Callaghan and Nixon reports were constructed to make the achievement of their aims of ‘improving’ Tasmania impossible. This effect of strategic governance is neither peculiar to Tasmania nor restricted to islandness. Callaghan noted that the island-State provided a microcosmic view of more general processes, but his and the later reports construed the governmental task, and the objects to which that task was directed, in ways that forced a contradiction: the framing of the problem to be resolved precluded a resolution. The three writers also mobilised their own opposition, for in formulating their ‘strategic visions’ for Tasmania they were forced to ignore or override the features that they recognised as integral to Tasmania.⁶⁴ To put the point abstractly, the identification of the object as problematic leads to the objectification of that problematic character as integral to the object with the result that no resolution is possible since any such resolution would mean a dispersal of the object itself.

Lockyer, Callaghan and Nixon each addressed the same spatiality – the disjunction and boundedness of islandness and community – and each implicitly rejected it even as he valorised its competitive advantage. Each began with the claim that Tasmanians *have* a problem, moved on to say that Tasmania *is* a problem, and then implicitly concluded that Tasmanians *are* the problem. Each saw that problem in Tasmania’s island community, and each saw the solution in the removal of that character. To use Cornelius Tacitus’ ([98] 1970) reporting of another island people’s rejection of a ‘lying’ form of government, the drive to make a social desert and call it peace is the logic of strategic governance.⁶⁵

It would perhaps not surprise Nixon in his former life as a hard-headed politician that his report quickly began gathering dust along with those of his predecessors. The ‘parochial loyalties’ identified by Callaghan were still strong in the State. So too was the mistrust of confident predictions for the State that led Lockyer (1926: 24) to comment that “the spirit of optimism had been tried for many years, but that it had not proved successful”. Given

⁶⁴ Nixon (1997: 8) did write of a requirement to “care for Tasmania’s environment” and notes that “where development does not respect the environment or cultural diversity, it runs the real risk of destroying the very things which support it”.

⁶⁵ Tacitus was married to the daughter of Julius Agricola, the Roman governor of Britain from AD 78 to 84, and wrote a biography, *The Agricola*, of his father-in-law’s campaigns in Britain. The quote is from a speech attributed to Calgacus, a Caledonian leader: “To robbery, butchery, and rapine, they [Romans] give the lying name of ‘government’; they create a desolation and call it peace” (Tacitus, [98] 1970: 81).

Tasmanians' routine subjection to the discipline of governmental inquiries and their equally routine disregard of the results, a question remains as the extent to which they are able to harness strategic governance to their own island- and community-bounded purposes.

The next chapter in this thesis traces the effect of the 'Tasmania problem' in the context of a novel political program that was established by Tasmania's new premier, Jim Bacon, when the Labor Party came to power in 1998. The program was designed to bring about a change of culture in Tasmania and give the State a new image externally. It involved an extensive community consultation – called Tasmania Together –; the image-changing Brand Tasmania; and an international arts festival – *Ten Days on the Island* – the theme of which was a 'celebration' of island cultures. The Labor Government's policy programs intensified and amplified themes of island and community in Tasmania. Critically, 'culture' was mobilised as a new form of governance as well as a more traditional form of political activity. The success of these was mixed, though Tasmanians entered fully into the idea that their communities and their islandness were central, though not necessarily 'problems', to Tasmanian life. Would this form of governance be, as Malpas and Wickham (1997) recommended more generally as an antidote to strategic governance, a partial, located activity, diversely engaging with people and objects and in negotiation with the complex spatial configurations that characterise the island-State?

Chapter 4 - Re-assembling an island community: governing Tasmanian culture

Premier Jim Bacon was looking on the bright side of the Olympic coin fiasco yesterday, as Tasmanians were fuming at being left off the medallion's national map. Mr Bacon said although it was ridiculous that the State had been omitted, it highlighted Tasmania's unique standing. 'More and more people are discovering that Tasmania is an island and it's different,' he said. 'If it takes us being left off a few maps I think perhaps, frankly, it's a small price to pay'.

Anon, *The Saturday Mercury* 2000: 2

Introduction

Tasmanian historian Michael Roe (2001: 139) has contended that "Tasmanian politics (following Tasmanian life) has a fatalist and even existential quality, offering ample evidence of the eternal recurrence of things". Mixing Friedrich Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence' with the classic refrain that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it, Roe's invocation of 'things' also highlights the tendency for features associated with Tasmania's geography to return in a rhythmic and patterned manner. A recurrent pattern is evident in reappraisals of Tasmania's island status. At various moments in Tasmanian history, islandness has resurfaced as a *source* for future development and progress, rather than being fatefully cast as a *cause* of historical stagnation and decline. The transformations that attended the re-valuing of island spatiality constitute ontological shifts, involving practices that 'reassemble' Tasmania's topological relations of islandness. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the practices involved in re-working Tasmanian islandness – relations of land-water, island-continent, and island-island – comprised associations that were primarily gathered according to governmental rationalities and technologies of 'culture'.

In the previous chapter I analysed three governmental inquiries that described twentieth century understandings of Tasmania as an island beset by economic, administrative and demographic maladies yet resistant to strategic governmental intervention. These inquiries, covering 70 years, document how Tasmania's island-geography was constituted

as a problem, and its distinctive regional and place-bound loyalties perceived as anachronistic and parochial. Tasmania was regarded as an economic 'basket case' requiring disciplinary attention because its inhabitants seemed unable or unwilling to ensure a rational separation of their material economic reality from wider 'social' relations. In effect, the image of Tasmania presented by the three governmental inquiries was of a backward 'traditional' 'island community' that was effectively ungovernable as it was irreconcilable with progressive 'modern' Australian 'mainland society'.

I suggested that the obdurate framing of Tasmania as an 'island community' within governmental attempts to 'solve' Tasmania's problems was, paradoxically, constitutive of these problems. Over the twentieth century, governmental attention focussed on effecting governance by the dissolution of Tasmania's characteristics, yet simultaneously sought to mobilise those same characteristics for governmental outcomes. That is, the 'isolated' island and 'backward' community became identified as unchangeable characteristics of place and people. Over time, the obdurateness of this appraisal resulted in island and community becoming identified as *the* key sites where government must induce change. Theoretically, the 'sociologies of governance' can be seen as recursively linked to the 'analytics of governmentality' (Rose, 1999): in the case of Tasmania, the 'failures' that accompanied successive attempts to govern in the name of an 'island community' resulted in further embedding of the notion that island and community were at fault. In turn, the resistances marked by community and island provided an impetus for and justified an understanding of Tasmania in terms of the distinctive qualities and attributes of an 'island-community'.

The three governmental inquiries on Tasmania in the twentieth century intensified efforts towards governing the State as an island community. If only an adequate understanding of Tasmanian islandness and Tasmanian communities could be discerned, then 'good' governance might be possible. As noted in Chapter 3, the paradoxical project of dissolving and mobilising islandness and community had acquired particular significance through the re-workings of the spatial that are ascribed to 'globalisation' (Armstrong and Read, 1995; Baldacchino, 2006b; Read, 2004). Varied forms of increased interconnectedness transformed the role of place, region and community in contemporary societies (for example, Amin,

2004; Appadurai, 1995; Cox, 1997). Those socio-material transformations were inflected through neo-liberal reforms of liberal-democratic governance. Nikolas Rose (1996, 1999) has detailed how the concept of ‘community’ underwent a change with the breakdown of notions of governing in the name of ‘the social’ or ‘society’. Ideas of community had long presented a challenge and critique to ‘mass’ or ‘bureaucratic’ society, insofar as they retained overtones of authenticity and shared locale, common morality and bonded culture. However, the instrumental mobilisation of community as a new spatiality of governmentality renders community ‘technical’. According to Rose (1996: 332):

Community here is a point of penetration of a kind of ethnographic sociology into the vocabularies and classifications of authorities; reciprocally, sociology itself intensified its investigations of collective life in terms of community and its anatomising of the bonds of culture and the ties of locality that were thought to be essential conditions for its moral order. Within a rather short period, what began as a language of resistance and critique was transformed, no doubt for the best of motives, into an expert discourse and a professional vocation ... Communities became zones to be investigated, mapped, classified, documented, interpreted, their vectors explained to enlightened professionals-to-be in countless college courses and to be taken into account in numberless encounters between professionals and their clients, whose individual conduct is to be made intelligible in terms of the beliefs and values of ‘their community’.

Tasmania, long understood as a distinctive community historically resistant to betterment, and consequently an eccentric misfit in modern society, would seem ideally positioned to take ‘advantage’ of shifts in governance that “de-totalise” the ‘social’ (Rose, 1996: 333). Tasmania’s islandness – specifically the parallel, cross-cutting and amplifying effects complicit in the performance of community and island – would seem to predispose its people to novel forms of ‘beyond-the-state’ governance.

The framing of Tasmania as an island is replete with discourses that position it as ‘backward’, ‘lacking’ and ‘other’ in comparison with mainland Australia. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, islands are intensely rich geographical figures, and hold contrary associations. Thus Tasmania is both prison and paradise. It is ‘other’ to mainland Australia, yet a ‘microcosm’ of the nation. The positioning of Tasmania as an ‘island community’, and

the frictions which that provokes, highlights the extent to which the governmental object of Tasmania is composed of imbroglis difficult to reconcile with modern distinctions, such as those between economy and social relations, politics and culture. Tasmanians therefore might be expected to be amenable to new governance networks that hybridise civil society and market ‘actors’ and ‘institutions’. Insofar as those hybrids destabilised and undermined a state-centric territorialism for the sake of global ‘flows’ of “capital, labour, commodities, information and images” (Lash and Urry, 1994: 12), they stood to transform the stalemate between governance and resistance. Nonetheless, certain themes remained. The old, apparent naturalness of the homology between island (unity) and governmental state (Tasmania) (Steinberg, 2005) at the end of the twentieth century ensured a fresh mobilisation of island as a means to organise new governance networks. Island and community thus continue to be critical social, material and discursive devices by which Tasmania is understood within apparatuses of rule. As such island and community are preserved as objects *of* and *for* governance.

This chapter has two aims. First, I investigate governmental attempts to re-position Tasmania’s islandness towards solving the Tasmanian problem. Here, intervention was not envisaged and enacted in terms of political-economy and administrative reform, but in terms of ‘culture’. In association with shifts in liberal styles of rule that emphasised ‘freedom’, culture (and more specifically the ‘cultural industries’ and ‘the arts’) became a critical site for governmental intervention around the turn of the twenty-first century. In Tasmania, mobilisation of the culture industry⁶⁶ represented a novel technique to encourage Tasmanians to celebrate and explore the State’s islandness. The Tasmanian people were encouraged to act as ‘islanders’, and to be known, detailed, identified and acted upon – and through – their ‘island culture’. Understandings of culture as bounded, developed, honed and critiqued by the social sciences, had provided a means to comprehend certain intimately linked characteristics: Tasmania is an island (it is bounded), hence Tasmanians as islanders are bounded, and therefore Tasmania has an ‘island culture’.

⁶⁶ Amongst other developments, a ‘Cultural Industries Council of Tasmania’ was established by the Tasmanian Government in 2000, which sought to set a strategic “direction for Tasmanian cultural industries for the next decade” (Cultural Industries Council, 2001: foreword).

Could Tasmanians solve their problems by capitalising on their cultural distinctiveness as islanders? That was certainly an alternative to the governmental strategies advocated by Nixon. One supporter of that vision was the outspoken Tasmanian novelist and environmentalist Richard Flanagan, here in conversation with Nick Evers, a previous State Liberal politician (MHA Franklin, 1986-1990):

Richard Flanagan: Tasmania is an immensely attractive place to live and it's also a vibrant place. It has a different culture, it has a different outlook on the world. That culture should be built upon. It's the source for the future. Instead it's being denied.

Nick Evers: Look, I don't think it's being denied, I think it's probably being ignored because people haven't been told or educated. There are people living here who want to get it right. It's not all a bloody lost cause and you don't want it to be a lost cause. (cited in Croome, 1997c: 148)

An advocate of that sense of cultural difference, who seemed to agree that Tasmanians needed to be reminded of and educated about their island culture, was the newly-elected (1998) Labor Premier Jim Bacon, who personally oversaw the institution of an international cultural festival for Tasmania – *Ten Days on the Island*.

Drawing on debates about culture and cultural distinctiveness *per se*, my second aim – enunciated later in the chapter – is to explore how the development of a major cultural festival became a critical means to link people and place so as to govern Tasmanians and Tasmania. Tasmanians' reputation for resisting governance in the name of island and community had resulted in governmental programmes through which they were envisaged as *predisposed* to modes of governance directed through ideas of island and community. The culture that Flanagan identified in 1997 as having been 'denied' and about which Evers suggested Tasmanians needed 'educating' was soon to become a key platform of Tasmanian government. Through a gestalt reversal, the island community that had appeared an impossible object of governance was re-figured and re-assembled, and the central site for that transformation was the *Ten Days on the Island* cultural festival; a novel governmental program.

To address these aims, I first outline the *realpolitik* of Tasmania at the turn of the twenty-first century. This is a critical moment in Tasmanian history, and I have concentrated on privileging and elucidating a number of themes that are central to a localised articulation of wider processes affecting conceptions of governance. Principally, Tasmania's recent history of adventures in divisive 'environmental politics' are shown as being linked to the Tasmanian problem in a way that forces reform of governmental structures in the hope of attaining an internal islander harmony. Bacon's Labor Government embarked upon a number of major policy initiatives and programmes to initiate a re-figuring of Tasmania's status as an island-community and provide a means by which to effect particular forms of governance that would address the Tasmanian problem. I place the development of *Ten Days on the Island* in the context of a suite of governmental programmes. Central here were the development of an extensive process of community consultation – Tasmania Together, and efforts to capitalise on the island image of the State – Brand Tasmania. By mobilising art and foregrounding culture, *Ten Days on the Island* sought to celebrate Tasmania as an island and Tasmanians as islanders.

Second, I revisit the literature on governmentality and actor-network theory to understand the deployment of culture as a spatial technique of governance within Tasmania; this work is necessary in order to understand later empirical chapters that detail the effects of a governmental mobilisation of culture. Recent analyses of governmentality (for example, Bennett, 2007; Hultman, 2007; Werry, 2008) have focussed attention on culture as a key site for governance. In turn, actor-network theory's redistribution of agency, within material networks extending through and beyond human actors and their intentions, offers me a means by which to trace the use of culture as a governing strategy in Tasmania.

Third, I show how the development of a major Tasmanian arts festival came out of the long-perceived need for Tasmanians to address their own economic, social and demographic problems by, first of all, taking pride in their achievements, building self-esteem, overcoming divisions, and transmuting their so-called cultural backwardness into the unique qualities of 'islanders'. Linking Tasmania's economic, demographic and political woes to a solution provided by a celebration of the island's culture had certainly received attention prior to the Bacon Government's support for an arts festival. In some

segments of Tasmanian social and political life such a vision had been a strong undercurrent. Proposing a 'global strategy for the twenty-first century', Andrew Edwards *et al.* (1999: [1]) thought the time was right:

Tasmania can never successfully compete with mainland Australia as we are intrinsically different. We are a group of islands with island lifestyles, island economies and all the advantages and disadvantages of island communities elsewhere in the world. It is here we should look for inspiration, initiatives and opportunities as we develop global solutions for the next century ... By engaging in comparison with mainland Australia, we will only feed an inferiority complex.

Rather than representing Tasmania in its old role as an island mendicant to the mainland, Tasmania would be presented (and present itself) in the cultural festival as 'a leader of islands' in a world of island cultures.

(1) Re-positioning an island community

Parliamentary reform, a State election, and a new governmental agenda

On 22nd July 1998, with a State election just over a month away, the Tasmanian Labor and Liberal parties acted on one recommendation in *The Nixon Report*, legislating to reduce the number of representatives in the House of Assembly (Lower House) from 35 to 25, and in the Legislative Council (Upper House or 'house of review') from 19 to 15. The reform had long been advocated by the two major political parties and business groups, including the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Tanner, 1996), whose executive routinely demanded the electorate return a majority 'stable government' at election times. Having delivered themselves a 40 per cent pay rise, the two political parties attempted to mitigate electorate anger at their increased remuneration by acting as one to reduce the size of the Tasmanian Parliament. In his report Nixon had argued that radical parliamentary reform was required in order for 'governments to govern'.⁶⁷ However, critics of the legislation, including several political analysts and constitutional experts from across Australia, argued that the reform represented an "assault on Tasmania's democracy" and was

⁶⁷ Nixon had not recommended this exact form of parliamentary reform. His model had been seen as even more radical as it called for the dissolution of the Legislative Council ('Upper House') and the creation of a unicameral parliament.

“unlikely to deliver effective government, adequate representation or proper parliamentary processes” (McCall, 1999a: 294).

Although the reduction was justified by claims that the State’s small population of just fewer than 500,000 was ‘over governed’, it appeared to favour the larger parties at the expense of minor political parties, especially the island’s environment political party – The Tasmanian Greens.⁶⁸ Political analyst Tony McCall commented (1999a: 292): “Under Tasmania’s Hare-Clark⁶⁹ proportional representative system this [legislation] would effectively raise the quota for election from 12.5 per cent to 16.6 per cent, making it difficult for minority parties, such as the Greens, to retain their seats in parliament”. At the time of the electoral reform, roughly seven of the previous ten years of government in Tasmania had involved the Greens in ‘minority governments’, including the ‘Labor/Green Accord’ led by Michael Field from 1989-1992 and the Liberal minority government led by Tony Rundle with Green support from 1996-1998. While there were contrary claims as to the ‘success’ of these governing coalitions, the Labor and Liberal parties viewed them as ‘disasters’ (see Haward and Larmour, 1993; Hay, 1991/92, 1992, 1998; Stratford, 2006a).

Some Tasmanians who, with Nixon, advocated for reduced parliamentary representation, saw the ‘minority governments’ of the late 1980s and 1990s as a dangerous manifestation of the “Green disease” (Barnett, 1999: 3; Way, 2000; see also Hay, 1987). The growing political influence of environmentalism during that period (Pakulski and Crook, 1998) was thought by many in government and the population to exacerbate Tasmania’s already substantial suite of economic, demographic and political problems. One response by business and

⁶⁸ Formed on 23rd March 1972 in order to politically contest the damming of Lake Pedder for hydro-electric power, the United Tasmania Group (which later became the Tasmanian Greens), has been credited with being the first environmental-based political party in the world (Pybus and Flanagan, 1990). Two months later, a similar island-derived environmental political party, the Values Party, was formed in New Zealand (Rainbow, 2006).

⁶⁹ The “most esoteric electoral system in Australia” (Homeshaw, 2001: 96) Hare-Clark has been used in Tasmanian State politics continuously since 1909. Hare-Clark uses ‘single transferable votes’, or preferential votes determined by voters (not by political parties through ‘ticket voting’ or ‘how to vote’ cards distributed at polling stations), to elect candidates from multi-member electorates. Unlike European systems of proportional representation, under Hare-Clark candidates “are elected by achieving a quota of votes, and those votes can be made up from votes cast for the candidate, or votes transferred to the candidate as preferences” (Wicks, circa 2004: 1). Judith Homeshaw (2001: 96) notes that it “is the most complete electoral manifestation of ... Australia’s tendency towards arithmetocracy – using mathematical formulae to maximise equality and proportionality of vote”. One effect of Hare-Clark is to give greater weight to votes for individual candidates, rather than parties, which in turn amplifies Tasmania’s ‘politics of personality’. For example, under Hare-Clark, candidates from the same political party vie with each other, as much as with candidates from other parties, to secure a quota.

industry to counter the 'Green disease' had involved attempted bribery. In 1989 a Launceston media magnate (Edmund Rouse), with extensive commercial interests in forestry businesses, offered a newly-elected Labor parliamentarian (Jim Cox) \$110,000 to 'cross the floor' and vote with the Liberal opposition in a no-confidence motion that would bring down the newly formed Labor/Green Accord (Tanner, 1995). While that attempt failed (resulting in the gaoling of Rouse for three years and the instigation of a Royal Commission), the impetus for it revealed the strength of concerns over 'green politics'. Given official voice by various public figures who agreed that Tasmania's 'backwards-looking' environmental movement was stifling economic development were sentiments expressed on car bumper stickers, which dated from the environmental controversy over the Franklin Dam in the early 1980s, and which include 'Doze in a Greenie: help Fertilise the South-West'.⁷⁰ Those assessments coupled the Tasmanian problem to environmentalism. David Barnett (1999: 3, 5), a prominent federal press gallery journalist and later official biographer of Australian conservative Prime Minister John Howard, put this position vividly:

Tasmania is chronically ill from the Green virus, and wasting away ... Perhaps Tasmanians are fortunate that their fertile and pleasant island has become an economic backwater, and a place for mainlanders to escape the hustle and bustle which goes along with economic activity ... If that is so, Tasmanians, providing they can find jobs, should be gratified, because Tasmania's fate is mostly, if not completely, all their own work. Tasmanians vote consistently for the Green and ALP [Australian Labor Party] politicians who have made their State so quaint.

⁷⁰ The sense of 'development' was apparent there in the assessment that the south-west of Tasmania was a 'wilderness' that needed fertilising. Other stickers more violently reinforced a 'pro-development' desire to rid the island of its 'green' politics, including 'If It's Brown, Flush It' (Bob Brown was a prominent environmental activist/politician) and 'Keep Warm This Winter: Burn a Greenie'. Those stickers were produced and distributed by the Organisation for Tasmanian Development (OTD). The OTD was set up in 1982 by right-wing Liberal leader Robin Gray in conjunction with left-wing union support (Pink, 2001), constituting an instance of the claim that Tasmanian political cultures commonly fostered alignments across ideological divides that elsewhere were seen as opposed. American-born Norm Sanders, who was a Democrat member of the Tasmanian House of Assembly (1980-1982), coined the term 'Laborials' "to explain the indistinguishable polices of the [Tasmanian political] parties and the crowding at the centre of the political spectrum" (Warden, 1983: 63). Robin Gray was Liberal Premier of Tasmania (1983-1989) during the divisive period of Tasmanian politics when debate over the inundation of the Franklin River from a dam on the Gordon River was central to Tasmania (and Australian) politics.

Maybe, if economic stagnation is what ... [Tasmanians] want, we should let them get on with it, and just enjoy the place on our holidays. Tasmania is, after all, very beautiful — should we care, if like Marilyn Monroe, it is also dumb and self-destructive, prepared foolishly to place its destiny in the hands of ruthless, powerful men and women who hold their own interests to be absolute?

Barnett (1999: 4) saw the Green disease as a “sovereign risk, that is to say government risk”, and thought it more typical of “Third World countries than developed nations like Australia”. By sovereign risk Barnett referred to the ‘problem’, already identified by Nixon and his antecedents, of Tasmanians furnishing themselves with governments that are supposedly adverse to their own interests, or, more specifically, the economic interests of capital. In presenting the Green disease as a critical element in the Tasmanian problem, Barnett supported Nixon’s diagnosis, including his suite of recommendations (see also Way, 2000).

While supporting Nixon’s suggestion that the ‘size’ of government be reduced, the Labor opposition showed little interest in any other solutions to the Tasmanian problem he had advanced. Prior to the 1998 election, *The Nixon Report* had come to be viewed as “a highly political document” and closely aligned with a policy *Directions Statement* released by the Rundle minority Liberal Government three months earlier (McCall and Hay, 2005: 229). Then, in the run-up to the election, the incumbent Liberal Government adopted elements of Nixon’s recommendations as key electioneering policy, while the Labor opposition actively opposed Nixon’s solutions. The election campaign thus presented Tasmanians with the sort of ‘clear choice’ Nixon had found so frustratingly and obdurately characteristic of Tasmanian political life.⁷¹

The opposition Labor Party did seem to admit Nixon’s diagnosis of Tasmania’s problems. In launching his election campaign, Labor’s leader Jim Bacon⁷² (cited in McCall 1999a: 295)

⁷¹ Indeed, Nixon felt compelled to fly into Tasmania two days prior to the election to reiterate his arguments. The choice was given added weight when the Federal Liberal/National Coalition offered to halve the \$300 million State debt owed to the Commonwealth, if a Liberal government was brought in for Tasmania. Federal Labor leader Kim Beazley accused Prime Minister John Howard of unprecedented sovereign State ‘blackmail,’ and promised to match the Coalition’s offer if Labor won the next Federal election.

⁷² Jim Bacon was born into a middle-class family in suburban Melbourne in 1950. He won a scholarship to study at Monash University in the 1960s. At university he was inspired by the writings of Marx and Lenin, and

re-articulated familiar contours of the Tasmanian problem when he repeated Nixon's 'choice': "The ultimate choice is between a future for our State as a ghost town, with an ever shrinking population living like paupers in paradise, or my dream of a Tasmania that is culturally confident, economically vibrant and politically progressive". Labor sought to reflect the language of confidence, progressiveness and vibrancy in its electioneering policies and painted Liberal policies as firmly embedded in the language of 'crisis'.

Differences between the parties were evident in one central issue during the election campaign: that of the State-owned Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC). Having been established in 1930, the HEC was deeply embedded in Tasmanian life and Tasmanian identity. Through the majority of the twentieth century the HEC was the central vehicle for 'statist development' in Tasmania (Walker, 1999), building dams to generate electricity to power industrialisation in a "march of progress", or so asserted long-serving HEC Commissioner A.W. Knight (cited in HEC, 1962: 9).⁷³ Liberal policies were premised on the partial sale of the State's iconic HEC in order to address Tasmania's 'debt crisis' "in a big way, rather than a turgid, incremental way" (Evers, cited in Croome, 1997: 140). This approach had been a central recommendation of Nixon's report. However, Labor accused the Liberals of over-stating Tasmania's financial difficulties and talking Tasmania down: there was merely a 'debt problem', not a 'debt crisis', and Labor thus refused to countenance privatisation of the HEC – an entity to which many Tasmanians had expressed strong emotional attachment and pride in the past. According to McCall and

headed organisations such as the Young Communist League and the Worker Student Alliance. In 1970, as a self-declared Maoist, Bacon led a protest action against the university's administration. He left Monash without graduating to work as a builder's labourer and then union organiser with the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF), for many Australians the most 'militant' union in the country. Bacon moved to Tasmania in 1980, continuing to work for the BLF, and in 1989 became Secretary of the Tasmania Trades and Labor Council. Elected to Tasmanian Parliament in 1996, Bacon was Leader of the Labor Party by 1997 and Premier in 1998.

⁷³ For many Tasmanians, especially those who worked constructing dams in the Tasmanian wilderness, the HEC were paradigms of progress and deeply cherished. Sir Walter Henry Lee, Premier of Tasmania (1916-1923 and 1934) articulated the reason for the reverence with which many Tasmanians held the HEC: "In Tasmania for many years we have laboured under the stigma of being a slow and unprogressive people, and it is all the more gratifying that at last we have risen to a recognition of the vast potentialities of our State, and seen the wisdom of turning them to account. In the hydro-electric scheme we have an undertaking exceeding in magnitude anything of its kind hitherto attempted" (cited in Shipway, 2002: 115). Doug Lowe (1984: 6), who was Tasmanian Premier (1977-1981), and had been ousted by his Labor Party colleagues for opposing the HEC, noted that the HEC was "an autonomous statutory authority almost completely responsible for its own affairs. It was neither directed by nor responsible to the Minister". For many other Tasmanians opposed to the building of dams, the HEC were a power unto themselves, the *de facto* government during the era which saw the flooding of Lake Pedder and the saving of the Franklin River from a similar fate (Pybus and Flanagan, 1990).

Hay (2005: 229), the “Liberals failed to generate public support for Nixon’s proposals ... and the sale of the HEC became a particularly divisive issue”.

If the desired effect of long-sought parliamentary reform had been, in the words of conservative Member of the Legislative Council George Brookes (cited in McCall, 1997a: 265), to ‘wipe out’ the Greens politically, then it very nearly succeeded. After the dust had settled on election night the Green party’s representation in the Parliament had been reduced from four to a solitary member, Peg Putt, in the Hobart-based seat of Denison (it took over two weeks to work through the complex distribution of preferences under Hare-Clark). Charismatic Tasmanian Greens leader, Christine Milne, who had decided not to move to a safer electorate, lost the fifth seat in the predominantly rural electorate of Lyons. Certainly, the Greens had lost their ability to be ‘king-makers’ in a ‘hung parliament’. Bacon’s Labor Party assumed power in the Lower House with fourteen members to the Liberal Party’s ten. After years of ‘political instability’ – largely attributed to the influence of the Greens – Tasmanians had returned a government with a mandate to govern.

The Labor Government’s ‘more orthodox’ (Way, 2000) solutions to Tasmania’s disabilities were to be founded in a discourse of inclusiveness, consultation, collaboration and partnership. The unity of majority government, which seemingly had been delivered electorally by a reduction in the number of members of parliament, now presented itself as a more inflected governmental logic. Upon assuming power, Labor’s policy agenda of unity and solidarity translated into governmental programmes that worked through and upon critical aspects of Tasmania’s island status and its distinctive communities. The headline “Island Rescue” (Way, 2000: 108) attached to a special feature in the national *Business Review Weekly* presented the new Government’s policy programme as rescuing Tasmania, a shipwrecked and solitary castaway, marooned from mainland Australia and the main currents of global economic flows. In the article, Premier Bacon (cited in Way, 2000: 109), stressed the importance of getting “the economy right” to attract the right kinds of investment, and spoke against the “one hit wonders”, “big-project syndrome” and “short-term fixes” of previous administrations. Instead, he set out a governmental agenda that presented Tasmania’s island geography and dense web of community relations as remedies to the island-State’s disabilities. In their previous guise, as barriers to Tasmania’s

development, island and community were thought to hold Tasmania back. But now community and island were presented as novel technologies for governance.

Labor embarked upon some key programs in its first term of government, including partnership agreements with local governments, a twenty-year strategic vision for the State based upon extensive community consultation and known as Tasmania Together, an information technology program, the use of Tasmanian 'icons' to market and brand the island, governmental support for a Brand Tasmania strategy, and new shipping and energy infrastructure to 'bridge' Bass Strait and take advantage of its existence. Below, I briefly identify how these governmental projects mobilised and transformed island and community.

Local Government Partnership Agreements

Tasmania's plethora of municipalities reflects its decentralised population, highly localised communities and strong place-bound attachments. Instead of rationalising local government, as Nixon recommended, Labor instituted a series of formal agreements with Tasmania's local government authorities. Rather than seek to weaken regional and parochial identities (and create conflict) by forcing municipal amalgamations (as had happened in 1992/3 under the Field Labor/Green Accord Government, when the number was reduced from forty-nine to twenty-nine), the Bacon Government sought greater co-ordination and shared purpose between State and local government and among local communities. Couched in the rhetoric of consultation and collaboration, the partnership agreements sought to make municipalities 'responsible' and 'accountable' while binding them to the Government's policy agendas. According to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (2010; n.p.), partnerships between State and local governments (and their business and community interests), "were introduced to improve the working relationship between the State Government and local government in Tasmania" to "find new opportunities for economic and social development". The first agreements were signed in 1999 and, according to business representatives (AICD, 2001: 2), by 2001 such partnerships were already "eroding ... the parochial rivalries that have so often bedevilled efforts at orderly development". Partnership agreements were one way of both working through Tasmania's parochial communities, as well as seeking to render them accountable to the requirements

of the State Government, effectively making archipelagic a range of internal islands and encouraging co-operation across municipal boundaries.

Tasmania Together

An effort to overcome ‘parochial rivalries’ and ‘internecine antagonisms’ (Cica, 2005) through consultation with the ‘Tasmanian community’ was also evident in what would become one contentious aspect of the Bacon Labor Government’s reform agenda (Crowley, 2005; Crowley and Coffey, 2007a, 2007b; Stratford, 2006b). Instigated in February 1999, Tasmania Together was centred on extensive and ongoing community consultation in order to develop a detailed plan that would direct governmental policy towards a future for the State putatively desired by ‘the community’. One of the Premier’s key policy advisors, Rosemary Sandford, had investigated similar plans from other ‘peripheral’ regions around the world (in particular from Oregon in the United States) and thought them amenable to Tasmania. Twenty-four Tasmanians, seen as ‘leaders’ in their respective fields, were assembled by the Government as a Community Leaders Group (CLG) and entrusted with overseeing the consultation process and formulating a ‘draft vision’ for Tasmania. Kate Crowley (2005: 9), who was later appointed to the Board of Tasmania Together as a representative of the University of Tasmania, provides a summary:

The social, environmental and economic plan includes a community owned and generated vision, twenty four goals, and two hundred and twelve benchmarks that are ambitious but measurable so that progress towards achieving the aspirations of the plan can be monitored and reported on every year. The plan provides a summary of where Tasmanians believe they are, where they want to be, how they will get there and how progress will be measured, with implementation overseen by the independent Tasmania *Together* Progress Board.

Tasmania Together was presented as “a brave and aspirational vision” for devising a 20-year strategic social, environmental and economic blueprint for the State “based on the hopes and dreams of the people” (CLG, 2001: 3). In publications released by the CLG the ‘Together’ of Tasmania Together was both *italicised* and **bolded**, reflecting the strategic governmental logic that Tasmania’s critical problem was a lack of social and geographic unity. McCall (2003: 106) noted the political attractiveness of Tasmania Together:

“governments are deliberately looking outside the existing tiers of government for a different form of institutional design that can demonstrate a legitimate claim to community representation and empowerment”. That seemed especially important given the reduction in representativeness that attended parliamentary reform. The CLG (1999: 2) presented the moment as (yet another⁷⁴) ‘crossroads’ in Tasmania’s history: a “unique opportunity to break the shackles of the past”. In a document entitled *Our Vision, Our Future* the CLG (1999: 1) asserted: “It’s decision time. Do we go down a road that enables us to grasp the challenge of the future, or do we continue the way we are and allow others to decide our destiny for us? It’s up to all of us”.

Outlining what they saw as positive features of Tasmania, the CLG (1999: 1) emphasised the state’s islandness and community, often linking them together: Tasmanians enjoyed an “island home”; “In an overcrowded world Tasmania’s island status gives us a sense of community, a unique brand and a sense of mystery”; and Tasmania’s “beautiful environment”, is “unique”. However, they intimated that there were “forces ... holding us back. Everyone realises we have problems”, detailing that “we lag behind the rest of Australia in most economic indicators, especially investment” and have “one of the highest unemployment rates of any state in the country” (CLG, 1999: 2). Recent global transformations associated with capitalist economic relations were said to play a part in depressing Tasmania’s economy: “the digital revolution” had resulted in the “centralisation of services” and the closure of commonwealth government and business offices in Tasmania; while “globalisation” had made it increasingly difficult for Tasmanian raw “commodity products ... to compete with the lowest cost producers around the world” (CLG, 1999: 2). However, more generally the CLG (1999: 2) repeated the assessments of earlier inquiries that Tasmanians themselves were the problem: “we are our own worst enemy. Regionalism is a curse. And often we expect someone else to prop us up and fix our problems”. Symptomatic of the significant change in modes of governance, the old call to develop or perish came not from government directly but from leaders within the

⁷⁴ The CLG seemed aware (but lacked Nixon’s irony) of their position in relation to a lineage of prior ‘blueprints for change’: “The big difference with Tasmania Together – the one that sets it apart from other plans – is that it will be the people’s plan. Not a plan forced on Tasmanians by government, but a plan based on our ideas and dreams” (CLG, 1999: 2).

Tasmanian community.⁷⁵ Notwithstanding the novelty of the governmental technique, its leaders (CLG, 1999: 2) delivered an appraisal broadly similar to that of Nixon: “And the answer lies with us, the Tasmanian community”.

Intelligent Island

In direct contradiction to the assessment made by the CLG that the ‘digital revolution’ had resulted in further Tasmanian marginalisation, Premier Bacon (cited in Bingham, 2000: 7), then recently returned from a visit to Silicon Valley in the United States, preached the island’s advantage in the era of information technology:

Geography now matters less and less ... The whole world of e-commerce is opening up, which means that not only tourism, but all Tasmanian businesses, don’t have to worry about a small market or national domestic market. Our marketplace is the entire world.

Around the same time, in the Federal Parliament in Canberra, the Tasmanian independent member Brian Harradine – who held the casting vote in the Senate – secured \$128 million for his home-State – \$40 million of which was to be invested in information technology – in return for supporting the part-privatisation of Australia’s publically-owned telecommunications utility (Telstra). Industry experts agreed that this bonus was equivalent to “the sort of money Bill Gates probably makes every hour” (Roach, cited in Warner, 2000: 9). But for Premier Bacon (cited in Bingham, 2000: 7), who used the \$40 million to launch his Intelligent Island⁷⁶ program, it would mean “an end to isolation for the state”. Intelligent Island involved seven major projects, including a research centre oriented to the commercialisation of innovative information technology; an enterprise development fund to provide e-commerce entrepreneurs with capital; a ‘business incubator’ to assist ‘fledgling’ companies; the encouragement of partnerships between local

⁷⁵ Many have pointed out the ‘Janus face’ of such novel governmental technologies (Gallent, 2008; Newman, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2005). “While enabling new forms of participation and articulating the state-civil society relationships in potentially democratising ways” (Swyngedouw, 2005: 1991) new governance processes, such as Tasmania Together, are also associated with a ‘democratic deficit’ in that the “*modus operandi* of networked associations is much less clear” (Swyngedouw, 2005: 1999) in comparison to established democratic processes. For example, “the internal power choreography of systems of governance-beyond-the-state is customarily led by coalitions of economic, socio-cultural or political élites” (Swyngedouw, 2005: 1999).

⁷⁶ Singapore had also embarked on an ‘intelligent island’ information technology program (see Arun and Yap, 2000; Chew, 2000; Tay, 2001).

Tasmanian and national and international e-commerce businesses; and additional moneys for industry education and training (Courvisanos, 1999; 2000).

Advertising to business interests, to attract them to Tasmania's 'Pocket Capital', the Hobart City Council outlined what an information technology package might mean for the island-State (Figure 4-1). At centre was a large computer key – the 'esc' key – in a sea of text, referring simultaneously to computer technology and to Tasmania as an island of 'escape'. "Spend your weekends fishing the Great Lakes, bushwalking through untouched wilderness or just messing about in a boat". Around the central key, smaller, archipelagic, computer keys displayed various idyllic visions of Tasmanian lifestyle:

When it comes to lifestyle, Hobart has all the key ingredients for the best quality of life in the country. A temperate climate covering four seasons, each with its own mood and story to tell, from majestic summer days to the tranquillity and romance of a winter afternoon. Your senses will come alive sampling the freshest produce, revitalising your spirit as you settle into the easy pace of life that is distinctly Hobart. Spend your weekends fishing the Great Lakes, bush walking through untouched wilderness or just messing about in a boat. All just a short drive from home sweet home.

What a place. What an office! Leave the rat race behind and join the many who have already discovered Tasmania's unique advantages through the opportunities and economies of the technological age. The dot com revolution has enabled business people to live where they please, working across distances previously restrictive and inefficient. Tasmania's 'Intelligent Island' focus offers the information highway as an effective escape plan to those thinking of relocation. Invest some time to discover for yourself why Hobart offers the best of both worlds, yet is truly worlds apart.

esc

HOBART CITY COUNCIL

movingFORWARD

For more information, access our website on www.hobartcity.tas.gov.au or email randallg@mailnet.tas.gov.au

Figure 4-1 Hobart City Council's advertisement in *Company Director Magazine* (AICD, 2001: 18)

In popular understandings, the internet had conquered the tyranny of distance and loosed the ties of place. The 'time-space compression' of late capitalism (Harvey, 1989), associated with information, communication and transportation technologies, had afforded an apparent 'non-place' (Augé, 1995) or 'placelessness' (Relph, 1976). Hence Hobart could send its message that the 'dot com revolution' had re-configured Tasmania's islandness into a 'unique advantage'. Tasmania's isolation was insinuated into the message as the

reason for the island's lack of prior development – resulting in 'a place' that is 'worlds apart'. In short, it was re-positioned as offering an idyllic refuge from the 'rat race' of urban life. With place now a prerogative of choice, why not choose Hobart as 'home sweet home', one which 'has all the key ingredients for the best quality of life in the country'?

Another advertisement in the same publication⁷⁷ had a related message (Figure 4-2). It showed a colour photograph of the island's iconic Cradle Mountain reflected in the still waters of an equally recognisable (for many Australians) Dove Lake. Across the mirrored surface of the lake in the (reflected) clear sky 'above' Cradle Mountain's inverted mountain peaks, is the message, "Tasmania. For business people it's even more beautiful in black and white".

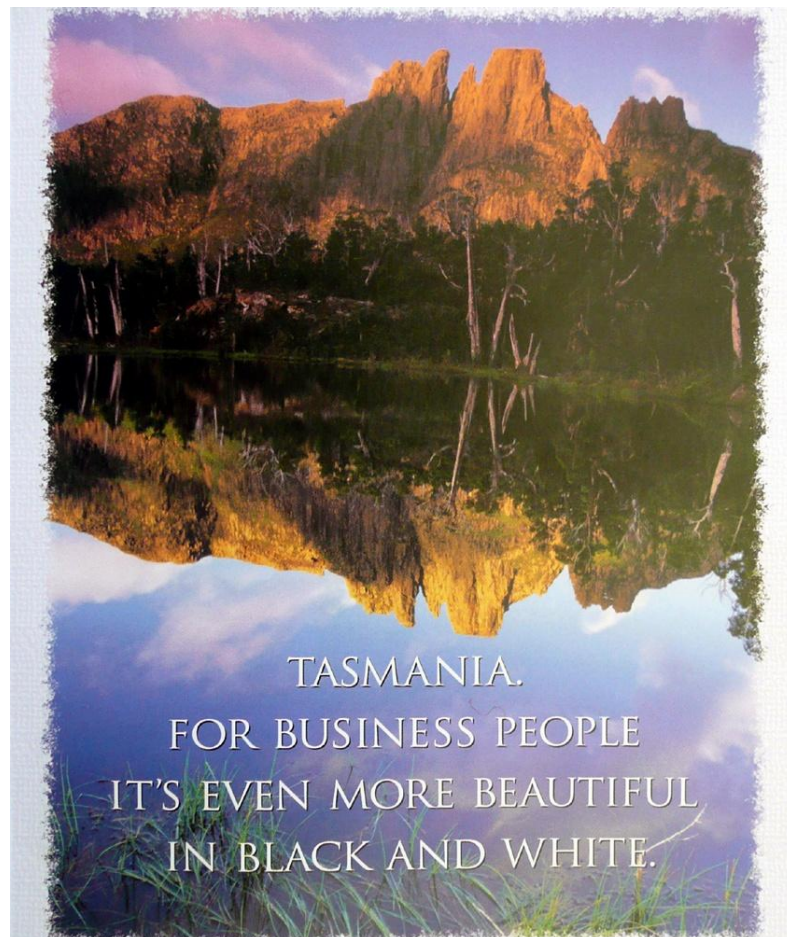


Figure 4-2 Tasmanian Department of State Development advertisement in *Company Director Magazine* (AICD, 2001: 7)

⁷⁷ A Tasmanian 'special feature' issue of the *Company Director Magazine*, a journal published by the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), designed to coincide with their annual conference at Hobart in May 2001.

Since the island's environmental controversies of the 1970s, the majestic grandeur of Tasmania's mountain landscapes has been closely associated with politics of a different colour – the island's 'green' politics – but in this chiasmic advertisement the scene of rock and water wilderness advertised the newly-created Tasmanian Department of State Development. Below the image (not included in that reproduced here), the advantages of Tasmania as a business destination were compared with the Australian average: House prices \$53,000 lower than the Australian average, wage levels \$4,637 lower than the Australian average, time lost in industrial disputes 54 days less than the Australian average. These statistics, cheering to would-be business investors re-locating from more expensive places, would in other contexts have been interpreted as signs of Tasmania's economic backwardness.

Tasmanian Icons

Other markers of the island's culture were also being transmuted into new economic opportunities. The Tasmanian Icons program launched in 1998 was designed to use Tasmania's institutional 'icons', such as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Tasmanian 'Tigers' Cricket Team, and the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research to demonstrate the State's 'competitive advantages'. Tasmanian Icons reflected a rhetoric that Tasmania's future lay in the island's unique qualities, its niche industries, iconic institutions and specialist markets; and not with risky large ventures that depended on large outputs and the vagaries of international markets. "It is about marketing and promoting the quality of the product and the identity of Tasmania. The island state already enjoys an international reputation for producing high-quality, clean commodities at the prestige end of the retail market" (AICD, 2001: 14) and, the "Government believes that Tasmania's future lies in embracing the advantages of its island status and the unique marketing advantages it offers" (AICD, 2001: 4).

Established in 1988 the Menzies Centre (now the Menzies Research Institute), conducts epidemiological research. Tasmania's unique value for the Institute resided in the population's distinctive genetic makeup, which was the outcome of Tasmania's relatively small, stable population structure, and the well-kept archival records that stretch back to the very early days of colonial settlement. At the 1981 census Tasmania had recorded

“demographic trends that are now atypical of the rest of Australia: a high proportion of its population (88.7 percent ...) are Tasmanian born” (Chapman *et al.*, 1986: 117). The transformation of “Tasmania’s close-knit population” into “a boon to scientific research” (AICD, 2001: 18) corresponds to a revaluation of Tasmanians’ genetic (convict) backwardness: long a source of embarrassment and mainlander teasing.⁷⁸ In these several ways Tasmania’s demographic insularity was undergoing a transmutation from disadvantage to iconic status.

Brand Tasmania

Ideas that island status and a distinctive island culture were positive forces for Tasmania’s future were also apparent in governmental support for a non-government organisation, Brand Tasmania. Comprising a mix of private and public sector bodies, Brand Tasmania was officially formed in July 1999 as an independent, but largely government-funded, organisation (Kent and Walker, 2000). Brand Tasmania developed in response to calls from senior administrative and business leaders that, if the island-State was to compete successfully in the ‘global marketplace’, it needed to “formulate and promote a place-of-origin branding initiative for Tasmania” (Brand Tasmania, 2002a: n.p.). Conversations between private and public sector individuals⁷⁹ had been going on for a number of years prior to official government financial support being provided (Int019).⁸⁰ In the late 1990s small amounts of funding had been sourced from the State Government’s tourism body, Tourism Tasmania. However, the Bacon Labor Government was the first to instigate a ‘Brand Tasmania’ initiative, including the establishment of the Brand Tasmania Council in

⁷⁸ One routine teasing is expressed in the popular question directed by mainland Australians to Tasmanians: ‘Where is your scar?’ This question follows from the idea that the island’s small and stable population and close-knit communities’ produces ‘inbreeding’, resulting in genetic abnormalities expressed as morphological deformations, such as being born with ‘two-heads’.

⁷⁹ The Executive Director of Brand Tasmania (Int008) noted that the original concept for branding Tasmania dated from the 1980s and was derived from Phillip Chandler, the founding Managing Director of the State Government Tasmanian Development Authority. People significant to the development of Brand Tasmania included Malcolm Wells (Manager of Tourism Tasmania), Tony Stacey (CEO of iconic Tasmanian footwear manufacturer, Blundstones), Kim Evans (Secretary of Department of Primary Industry, Water and Environment), Peter Shelley (Managing Director of Tassal, a salmon aquaculture company), Andrew Pirie (Tasmanian wine maker) and Evan Rolley (Managing Director of Forestry Tasmania).

⁸⁰ These numbers refer to a series of fact-to-face interviews that were conducted with research participants. See Table 6.1 in Chapter 6 (p. 256-258) for description.

1999. This initiative was backed-up by a significant increase in funding for advertising and promotion of the State in the 1999-2000 State budget (Treasury Tasmania, 1999).⁸¹

Reflecting a move towards integrated approaches to marketing and business strategy popular in corporate culture since the 1990s (Moor, 2007), the advent of place-of-origin branding rests on the heightened importance given to 'place' in the semiotic economies taken to characterise post-industrial or 'reflexive' capitalism. That Tasmania should capitalise on its 'image' – specifically its 'clean and green' environment – had long been proposed, in particular by Green politicians. Brand Tasmania provided a means to uncouple the claim that "authenticity is what must be pursued, at all costs" (Milne, 1993: 35) from the exclusive purview of the environmental lobby. In a clear example of the revaluation of Tasmania's island status, its place and its people, Brand Tasmania (2002a: n.p.) outlined its corporate vision for

Tasmania to be recognised as a leader in the world of islands, with a global reputation for quality products and services. To achieve this the [Brand Tasmania] Council will promote a strong, positive perception of Tasmania by connecting its recognised natural values to the resourcefulness, innovation and creativity of its people.

Brand Tasmania worked to realise that vision through a number of strategies for 'connecting Tasmania's natural values to its people'. It built organisational membership by requiring applicants to meet a "strict set of criteria" (Brand Tasmania, 2002a: n.p.). Appropriate members should have a verifiable "Tasmanian origin", represent "Quality" in their organisation and products, be "Compatible with Tasmanian Brand Values", demonstrate a belief in Tasmanian "Human Resources" and exhibit high levels of "Environmental Responsibility" in their business activities (Brand Tasmania, 2002b: 3-4).

Brand Tasmania decided against developing its own quality assurance system to which members must adhere. Rather, partners were encouraged to have "a Quality Assurance system acceptable to the relevant industry sector" (Brand Tasmania, 2002b: 3). The reason

⁸¹ Perhaps Tasmanian Labor was also inspired by the experience of 'New Labour' in Britain, which embarked upon a major re-branding of Labour's political 'style', 'tone' and 'delivery' during the mid-1990s (Moor, 2007). Certainly, Jim Bacon's Government was criticised for its employment of numerous highly paid public relations and media managers ('spin-doctors'), and for the tight control that was exerted over the distribution of government information that sought to promote a particular image of Tasmania (McCall and Hay, 2005).

given for this industry-specific approach was that Brand Tasmania did not consider that it should act “as a policeman [sic], looking over people’s shoulders” (Int019). The lack of a consistent set of quality assurance criteria also reflected perceived incompatibilities between certain Tasmanian industries, especially tensions between the forestry industry and those of tourism, agriculture and fisheries. According to one advocate of a brand strategy as the cure for Tasmania’s ills, there “should be a simple maxim: if it does not fit the identity that Tasmanians want to project to the rest of the world, it doesn’t belong in the state” (Castles, 2002: 111).

Demonstrating the economic effects and political purchase that such claims of incompatibility have had, a number of private and public sector initiatives have been undertaken to militate against apparent industry conflicts. Thus, for example, major private forestry company Gunns Limited purchased a number of prominent Tasmanian vineyards in an area which would later become its preferred site for building a pulp mill (e.g. Tamar Ridge winery in the Tamar Valley near Launceston). The government business enterprise Forestry Tasmania, charged with managing State-owned forests, invested heavily in regional tourist infrastructure (for example, the Tahune Air Walk south of Hobart; Dismal Swamp in the north-west; and the Scottsdale Eco-Centre in the north-east). In 2003 the Tourism Council of Tasmania (a non-government organisation that seeks to represent the island’s tourism industry) signed a ‘code of mutual understanding’ with representatives from the forestry industry (including Forestry Tasmania), dealing with such contentious issues as the wood-smoke created from forestry ‘regeneration’ burns, tourist encounters with log trucks, and the retention of ‘aesthetic’ strips of roadside vegetation when logging near tourist roads (Tourism Council of Tasmania *et al.*, 2003). In this context, Brand Tasmania was itself embroiled in a desire to ‘manage’ such conflicts, especially insofar as conflicts could be controlled at the level of ‘image’.

Additional strategies pursued by Brand Tasmania included sourcing positive press coverage for the island, primarily by funding a number of visits by national and international journalists. The organisation also sourced a variety of Tasmanian merchandise for members to use as promotional material (videos, CDs, image library, lapel pins, and banners). Brand Tasmania also attempted to ensure the ‘authenticity’ of claims to

place-of-origin (Tasmanian) branding; in some cases it threatened legal action against organisations and businesses it identified as making bogus claims. More generally, Brand Tasmania understands its role as one to protect and foster values that the organisation holds to be significant to Tasmanians. When explaining those values, representatives from Brand Tasmania identified ‘island mystique’ as the critical foundational characteristic from which other values were derived.⁸² Thus, in summarising the mission of the organisation, the Executive Director (Int008) said

Our mission is to be a champion and guardian of the Tasmanian Brand, and to encourage others to leverage their marketing by connecting to the Tasmanian Brand values. Those brand values are – we claim – island mystique. And that sets up the place thing. And then we talk about innovation, creativity, design, and authenticity.

The Chairman (Int019) of the Brand Tasmania Council spoke in a similar vein when outlining the thinking behind Brand Tasmania:

It’s all built around what we call the island mystique. I mean the first thing we did was recognise that the quality of Tasmania is that it’s an island and that we’re island people. And because of Bass Strait, the population here is different from the population you have in Melbourne and Sydney and other places. We haven’t had the influx, the large influx of people from other countries [that the Australian mainland has] ... and the Tasmanian population tends to be fairly static. Now that’s a real worry in another sense, but it means that Tasmanians are Tasmanian.

Thus, central to the image that Brand Tasmania sought to promulgate as being distinctive to the State were emphases on Tasmania as an island, Tasmanians as authentic islanders,⁸³ and the idea that “Tasmania be recognised as a leader in the world of islands” (Brand Tasmania, 2010: n.p.).

⁸² Susie Khamis (2007: 21) identified a similar process underway on King Island in Bass Strait. She notes: “increasingly, the brand appealed to the popular image of King Island as clean and green: it became synonymous with purity, tradition and wholesomeness, traits that rendered all its produce both lucrative and rare”.

⁸³ See John Connell (2006) for an example of ‘authentic’ island branding in Fiji.

Spirit of Tasmania I, II and III

The continual importance of Bass Strait to the distinctiveness of Tasmanian islandness was evident in governmental strategies that sought to overcome the problem that the body of water presented for the movements of people and products. On March 8th 2002 Premier Bacon and his deputy Paul Lennon announced the acquisition of two monohull ‘superfast’ ferries to replace the existing Government-ran ferry, *Spirit of Tasmania* on the trans-Bass Strait interstate route between Devonport and Melbourne. A radical transformation of space – a topological ‘crumpling’ of the kind discussed in Chapter 2 – was envisaged in Bacon’s boast that the new service was “as close as you can currently get to building a bridge between Tasmania and the rest of Australia” (cited in Haley, 2002a: 2). This representation was not the first of Bass Strait as a ‘road’ common in Tasmanian claims for ‘transportation equality’ with mainland Australia. Arguments that Bass Strait should be no more a barrier to movement than ‘equivalent’ expanses of land on the mainland led, in the late 1970s, to the Commonwealth Government introducing the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (Harvey, 1986). This scheme was followed in 1996 by another scheme that subsidised vehicles using “a rebate against the fare charged by a ferry operator ... calculated on the basis of a net fare, for an eligible vehicle plus its driver, that is comparable to the notional cost of driving an equivalent distance on a highway” (Bureau of Transport Economics, 2001: ix). Providing up to \$300 assistance for return travel to and from Tasmania, in 1998, Mark Vaile (1998: n.p.), the Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Development, heralded the scheme as a “runaway success” that had “been a major boost to the State’s economy and tourism industry”.⁸⁴ The purchase of two new ferries sought to capitalise on the federal funds made available through those schemes.

⁸⁴ The scheme, which is uncapped and demand-drive, “contributed to increased sea traffic between the mainland and Tasmania” (Bureau of Transport Economics, 2001: xi) resulting in a 51 per cent increase in sea passenger traffic and a 91 per cent increase in vehicular traffic between 1995/96 and 1998/99. Leading up to the centenary of Federation in 2001, an organisation, called the ‘National Sea Highway Committee’, sought the widening of the scheme: “Whilst the cost of a driver and car has been equalised ... accompanying passengers should not therefore be required to pay what is in effect a ‘transport toll’ to cross [Bass Strait]”, arguing that “Tasmania does not suffer from the tyranny of distance but from an arbitrary distinction favouring surface travel across mountains and deserts over water access” (Brohier, 2001: n.p.). Such arguments have not been limited to sea transport. In 2001 a select committee of the Tasmanian Legislative Council (Wing *et al.*, 2001: 2) recommended that “Federal funds be provided on a permanent basis to reduce the cost impact to passengers travelling across Bass Strait by air”. Quoting numerous previous reports that had investigated “the problems of being an island” and keen to avoid the charge of suffering from a “cringe mentality”, the select committee

However, the invocation of a 'bridge' between the island and the mainland was more than a topological deformation, as it might potentially rupture islandness itself (see Baldacchino, 2004d; Begley, 1993; Wilson, 1994). A 'bridge' carried its own, new, problem, that of reducing Tasmania's newly desirable islandness. As a business editorial (AICD, 2001: 10) had previously noted: "An island lifestyle is both blessing and curse. The upside for a tourism destination such as Tasmania is that it has all the mystery, magic scenery and exotic lifestyle of a remote location. The downside is getting there". According to the Government, *Spirit of Tasmania I* and *II* would go some way towards re-dressing the barrier represented by Bass Strait. By increasing the comfort of the journey – which became a luxurious experience, cutting travelling times from 14.5 to 10 hours, increasing passenger capacity from 750,000 to 1.5 million per annum and car capacity from 200,000 to 800,000 per annum, and doubling the freight capacity, the new ferries would effectively "catapult Tasmania's tourism industry into a new era" (Bacon, cited in Haley, 2002a: 2).

The news was welcomed enthusiastically by Rob Giason, CEO of Tourism Tasmania, the key governmental organisation responsible for advertising, marketing and setting strategic direction for Tasmania's tourism industry. Giason (cited in Bingham, 2002a: 3) thought "the introduction of the two ferries is timely and a real bonus in terms of marketing the State both nationally and internationally". Other commentators from the tourism sector compared the introduction of the two new ferries with previous developments in tourist infrastructure, such as the opening of Australia's first casino at Wrest Point, near Hobart's city centre in 1973, and noted that the ferries would "be the single biggest boost State tourism has ever experienced" (Bingham, 2002a: 3). It was envisaged that improved access would result in "millions of dollars in new investment in tourism-related infrastructure", and encourage existing operators to "further develop and improve their properties" (Roberts, cited in Bingham, 2002a: 3). For a short while, until it proved to be economically unfeasible, these two ships were joined by a third ferry, the *Spirit of Tasmania III*, which linked Sydney with Tasmania.

sought a distinction between land and sea when they argued that "Tasmania's physical separation creates a transport disadvantage of *isolation*. This is distinguishable from the transport disadvantages of *distance* suffered by remote parts of mainland Australia" (Wing *et al.*, 2001: 4).

Policy programs designed to improve access to the island were not restricted to sea travel. In April 2001, after much lobbying by the Tasmanian Government and partly as a result of deregulation of the air transportation industry (Weller, 2007), a third major air carrier entered the Tasmanian market. Impulse Airlines offered cheap fares, which the existing carriers, Ansett⁸⁵ and QANTAS, quickly bettered. This competition, part of a world-wide trend towards relatively inexpensive air travel, was soon to be given added impetus by the redirection of Australian international travel towards domestic markets in the wake of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in September 2001. The island-State was more accessible than it had ever been.

BassLink and Tasmanian Gas Pipeline Project

The policy of capitalising on the advantages of Tasmanian islandness was not limited to attracting tourists to Tasmania. It was boosted by the growing national and international market for 'superior-quality' Tasmanian products at the top end of the price range.⁸⁶ One such example was the export of hydro-electric power to mainland Australia. The BassLink project, embarked upon by the State-owned power utility, Hydro Tasmania (the old HEC), consisted of an undersea power cable linking Tasmania to the national electricity grid. At a cost of \$500 million for the infrastructure, it allowed a two-way transfer of electricity whereby Tasmania could sell premium 'clean, green renewable' (hydro) power to mainland Australia and import cheaper 'dirty' (coal-fired) power from the national grid – and in the process ensure energy security for Tasmania (Duncan, 2004). Hydro Tasmania's advertisement, featuring a rugged landscape, dark gloomy skies, gathering clouds, and a giant white wind turbine bathed in bright light (see Figure 4-3), reinforced a familiar gothic image of Tasmania as an island of inclement weather. The text for the advertisement began with a challenging but quotidian declaration 'Nice day for it', before enthusiastically extolling the green benefits of Tasmania's miserable weather.

⁸⁵ Ansett Airlines, however, collapsed on 14th September 2001. Since then a number of other carriers entered the domestic market, including Virgin, Tiger and the budget version of QANTAS, Jetstar.

⁸⁶ For example, one fascinating example of an economic revaluation of island status in regards to agriculture has resulted in Tasmania producing 40 per cent of the world's legal opiate supply, principally on the basis that Tasmania, as an 'island fortress', makes it a 'safe' and 'secure' place for growing opium poppies that would elsewhere be subject to theft (Williams, 2010).



Figure 4-3 Hydro Tasmania's advertisement in *Company Director Magazine* (AICD, 2001: 13)

This advertisement's larger-than-life message sustained a twentieth-century dream, that Tasmania's industrialisation, if and when it came, would be driven by hydro-electric power from the island's wilderness. That vision in turn had longer lineages. Describing a trip through the highland lakes country of Van Diemen's Land in the 1840s, David Burn (1973: 127) asked

Who can tread the wilds of unfettered nature, and contemplate in all her desolate grandeur, without feeling impressed how insignificant an atom he is amid her glorious works—and how utterly dependent upon his kind? The floral mead—the pearly stream—the goodly grove, however they delight the eye, or ravish the imagination—what are they all?—a worthless waste, until the genius and industry of man converts and fits them for the welfare and enjoyment of his kind.

Whereas previously the dream had involved selling cheap power to attract manufacturing industries to the island, now it was to serve the State in two less expensive ways: Tasmania capitalised on its distinctiveness as an island producer of 'renewable' energy, which fetched premium prices on the mainland; and Tasmania triumphed over the problems of its isolation and disconnection. Previous resistance to large-scale industry (the 'green disease') was transmuted into economic opportunity. Tasmanians had preserved their beautiful island and, in selling green power to the mainland, were profiting from their green wilderness.

Another infrastructure project oriented to 'bridging' Bass Strait – was undertaken by U.S. energy company Duke Energy International – though here the flow was one-way, into Tasmania. The Tasmanian Gas Pipeline Project involved a 305km trans-Bass Strait pipeline for natural gas from Victoria to Tasmania. Premier Bacon (cited in AICD, 2001: 2) described the project, estimated to cost \$400 million, as 'fundamental' to Tasmanian industrialisation, ensuring that Tasmania would be considered "in a new light". Once again he consciously echoed earlier rhetoric: "It is certainly not fanciful to compare the advent of natural gas with the start of the hydro-electric era that dominated the State's industry agenda during most of the twentieth century".

Re-positioning island and community

The programmes outlined above and initiated by Bacon's Labor Government continued the trajectory of framing Tasmania as an island community. On the one hand, many of the governmental programmes, such as those that 'bridged' Bass Strait, were undertaken in ways that both repeated and amplified earlier assessments that the island-State was the problem-State. Discontinuity was as much a factor as continuity here. Whereas previous strategies for solving the Tasmanian problem had been oriented towards overriding the characteristics identified as problematic, the island and its people had now been re-configured as the means by which to effect a transformation of Tasmania's fortunes. Bacon made clear this potential in a book review he wrote in the autumn of 2001. *Baltimore's Mansion*, by Canadian writer Wayne Johnston (2000a), was a personal memoir of the writer's home island of Newfoundland. Bacon (2001b: 40-41) explained that his review would not address the book as literature, but for how it had illuminated for him why a

Premier of an island-State who had been born on mainland Australia might be “obsessed with learning more about the unique characteristics of islands and their communities”. The tale from Newfoundland confirmed his idea that island and community could be used to ‘improve’ the lot of Tasmanians:

There is a mystique, particularly among continental dwellers, about islands. There always has been and there always will be. It is ironic that in order to do all the things we want to, to improve in an all-rounded way, the life of Tasmanians, we must capitalise on this mystique. With the communications revolution exploding around the world, Tasmania and Newfoundland, and many other islands, are attracting attention like never before. It is because they are different! Protecting and promoting what we have that is unique will provide the only relatively safe haven in an often savage era of economic and cultural globalisation. Islanders, by necessity, are resourceful and independent but also strongly community-minded. Islanders, by geographic fact, have a profound relationship with land and sea ... Islanders seem forever obsessed with ‘going away’ or ‘coming home’... Any wonder, then, that islanders can become passionately divided over questions of future direction? ... It is my hope that through our processes of Tasmania Together setting the direction and Partnership Agreements binding us together, we islanders in Tasmania can resolve questions of future direction without such destructive division.

The conflict ever present in assessments of Tasmania’s ‘unique characteristics’ is evident in the statement just quoted, with its image of an island community riven by differences yet unified by the island’s bounded form. Yet Bacon’s rhetoric reflected a more general governmental shift away from seeing islandness as a barrier, and to seeing it as a unique opportunity. As a means for and of development, islandness warranted careful governmental ‘protection’, ‘promotion’ and ‘capitalisation’.

In view of the historical irony attending this reappraisal of island spatiality, which Bacon acknowledged, how might such a reassessment be understood? In part, and paradoxically, the reversal was a product of the long history of ‘failure’ attending the governmental inquiries that I investigated in Chapter 3. Along with myriad other similar appraisals, those inquiries created a particular image of Tasmania. Increasingly, island and community were established as markers of a Tasmania resistant to change. Historically, linking island

and community in the bondage of obdurate islandness was first used to excuse failed attempts by government to overcome the State's economic problems, and over time took the form of an indissoluble unity precluding any solution. Turned around, the argument might become that if Tasmanians consistently identify as 'resistant' on the basis of their islandness and their communities, then it is towards these characteristics that governmental programmes need to be directed. However, the ability to 'embrace', 'affirm' and 'celebrate' characteristics of Tasmanian islandness and community, rather than seek their dissolution, only became possible when those entities were subjected to a thorough re-working. That, too, was apparent in the Premier's book review, for while he suggested that the mystique islands held for continental dwellers was timeless, he also identified various transformations that rendered that mystique amenable to and available for 'capitalisation'.

The problematic revaluation of 'community' is well documented in the governmentality literature (Rose, 1996; 1999). The shifting fortunes of 'island' may be likened to more general 'post-national' shifts theorised as the end of the cold war, the breakdown of the nation-state form and new emphasis on the 'region' as the 'natural' territorial economic, cultural and social unit (Löfgren, 2004, 2007; Paasi, 2003, 2004a). According to Anssi Paasi (2004b: 177),

State boundaries in particular have lost much of their significance in a globalised world dictated by new forms of geo-economics and information economics that give priority to mobility, speed and flows of various kinds. This will question the static territorial patterns that have usually been linked with cultural and political boundaries in nationalistic thinking.

However, those are general theoretical arguments about trajectories that await longer-term empirical elucidation and investigation. Having briefly shown how a re-positioning of Tasmanian islandness took place within many of the Bacon Government's policies, in the remainder of this chapter I explore that shift by examining the cultural festival that Bacon took on as a personal project. Island ceased to be an insoluble factor in Tasmanian economic, social and political dysfunction, and increasingly was deployed as an advantage to redress Tasmania's ills. Nowhere was this transformation more apparent than in the

governmental support for Tasmanian cultural and artistic endeavours. Premier Bacon (2001b: 41) finished his book review by noting “another characteristic of island communities” – “they have a greater concentration of people involved in creative activities”. As it sought to redefine, revalue and re-position Tasmania’s islandness, the most wide-reaching, ambitious and novel aspect of this style of governance, was the development of *Ten Days on the Island*, a cultural festival that ‘celebrated’ Tasmania as an island and Tasmanians as islanders. Before turning to this festival in section 3, I first draw upon the emerging scholarship that analyses the convergence of governance and culture. I do so in order to explicate what might be at stake in the governmental use of culture.

(2) Governing and culture

As explained in Chapter 3, governance signifies a variety of novel arrangements between state and non-state actors, institutions and agendas, formulated under various liberal and neo-liberal styles of rule. Foucault’s writings on governmentality focus attention on the co-constitutive links between types of expertise and strategies for the regulation and management of conduct that particular governance arrangements seek to effect. Some attention has been given to the ‘technologies of the self’ through which subjects of liberal government are “induced to take up particular positions of auto-regulation in relation to their selves” (Bennett *et al.*, 2007: 529). However, analyses of governmentality have often given insufficient attention to those spatial aspects of governance through which particular subjectivities are conceived and fostered. Margo Huxley (2007: 186) notes: “In sociological and political studies of liberal governmentality, space and environment are suggestive, but under-developed, presences”.

Recall that governance is inherently spatial in two key senses. The first is that in order for objects to be governed they need to be delineated from and brought into proscribed relation with other objects; that is, they are framed spatially. The second is that governmental practices assemble a mix of entities that, in their enactment, constitute specific spatial orderings of the world. That is, the spatial practices of governance involve both ‘imaginaries’ and ‘performances’ (Kothari, 2006). The governmental mobilisation of culture also contains these two senses of spatiality, and can be viewed through the same theoretical framework which seeks to establish links between government strategies and

techniques for the production of liberal subjectivities and the governance formations through which they are delivered. Tony Bennett *et al.* (2007: 541) suggest that researchers could “explore the historical formation of ‘culture’ as a distinctive form of public organisation”; and hence, they see culture as “an assemblage of certain artefacts, buildings, people and practices with the purpose of acting upon the social in certain ways and so forming the human character”. A spatial analysis of governance through culture assists in minimising a latent ‘functionalism’ operating in many Foucauldian analyses of governmentality: “they imagine all forms of action as primarily strategic action” (Barnett *et al.*, 2008: 630). One methodological effect of such analyses is an inability to acknowledge “the degree to which the rationalities that govern strategic interactions are not the pre-existing properties of the different actors involved, but are an emergent dimension of ongoing interaction itself” (Barnett *et al.*, 2008: 632).

Mitchell Dean (1999: 7) has contended that governmentality is “itself a mixed substance and one that only works well when alloyed with others”. While it is unclear which is the baser ingredient, one admixture currently popular in the crucibles of geographers and others is to combine governmentality with actor-network theory (Bennett, 2005, 2007; Hultman, 2007; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Murdoch, 2006). I see advantages in that approach. Actor-network theory is based upon agnostic attention to assemblages of heterogeneous entities, and exhibits a related and concomitant refusal to accede ‘agency’ (or what makes a difference) only to humans. These characteristics eschew a simplistic account of governance as the frictionless relaying of specific ‘human interests’ via ‘culture’. Instead, the semiotic-materiality of what is assembled together in the name of ‘culture’ does make a difference to the ways in which attempts at ordering the world are achieved. The emphasis on ‘documents, devices and drilled bodies’ that John Law (1986b) discerned in Foucault’s works are comparable to the heterogeneous constitution of actor-networks. The notion of a transparent and inviolable governmental ‘agenda’ separated from the material, semiotic and collective assemblages that constitute formations of ‘culture’ is untenable. Rather, various entities, human, inhuman and non-human, derive their ‘own’ agendas and shape the workings of the assemblages within which they are enlisted, as much as they are shaped by them (Callon, 1986). The following discussion of the political rationality of culture has been organised according to Bennett’s call to analyse the

conjunction of culture and governance as a ‘distinctive form of public organisation’ and as ‘assemblages ... for acting on the social’.

Organising through culture: ‘ways of living’

As one of modernity’s central precepts, the notion of ‘culture’ – like that of ‘society’ and ‘nature’ to which it is inextricably tied (for example, Latour, 1993, 2007) – has undergone extensive conceptualisation, formulation and critique since it first became a major focus in the sociological analysis of societies in the late nineteenth century (Williams, 1976). A list of 164 definitions of culture was compiled by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952), underscoring both the multiplicity of conceptualisations and the significance of those to the humanities. At the heart of sociological and anthropological understandings of culture is the notion that it refers to a distinct ‘way of life’ learned and exhibited by a human collective and characterised by a common language and shared norms, customs, habits, and symbols. *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (Abercrombie *et al.*, 1988: 59) notes that “sociologists ... refer to the culture of social groups as the total set of beliefs, customs or way of life of particular groups [and] ... typically regard the culture of industrial society as fragmented and diversified”. Culture is used to refer to the totality of a bounded society’s socialised beliefs, behaviours and expressions, but the word is also used for minority cultures, ‘alternative’ groups, occupational, and other sub-cultures. Much thought has gone into questioning the boundaries of the social, for though cultural difference is perceived and forcibly enacted between and across societies that performance in itself demonstrates that the boundaries are open rather than closed. This central problematic – between the identification of cultures as discrete bounded forms and the enactment of cultures within and across those boundaries – reverberates in my study of islandness, as it does within many analyses of island studies, within geography’s sub-field of ‘cultural geography’, and more generally within the social sciences and humanities.

Judging from the extensive literature of sociology, social anthropology and ethnography, culture as a distinct way of life is performed in an on-going mobile exchange; it is acquired and changes socially, and is performed in material form, in beliefs expressed as well as in behaviours exhibited. Otherwise (a negative definition) there is nothing that *is* specifically cultural. Bruno Latour (2005: 5) made a similar point when summarising his critique of the

‘social’ as a specific kind of ingredient in the analyses of the social sciences: the ‘social’ “is not some glue that could fix everything including what other glues cannot fix; it is *what* is glued together by many other types of connectors”. Many aspects of culture – such as one’s ‘native’ language/s – are learned through complex, deliberate and time-consuming practices of education and by virtue of living in a family and society where they are spoken. Multi-cultures are characterised by the leaching of culture across the permeable border zones between co-existing groups. Sub-cultures arise through a mixture of unconscious and more consciously learned behaviour in the zones of daily life (workplace, pub, sports field, art community, etc). Other forms of culture (‘alternative’ cultures, cultures involving learned skills, religion, etc) are acquired more precisely by special education: the milieu is that of education rather than the ‘wider society’.

In the English language, the earliest usage of the word ‘culture’ was in the contexts of agriculture, religion, and education and, from the seventeenth century, the culture produced in a laboratory, as in ‘culturing’ bacteria (*OED*). Cultivation by a good education produced a ‘cultured’ person. With the specialisation of disciplines in the nineteenth century, the refining or civilising effect of ‘high’ culture came to be associated, in particular, with the various high arts. Within this framework, civilisations have been ranked by their ‘cultural repertoires’: tools, literacy, architecture, science, artifacts, religious practices and beliefs, and so on. Despite the relativism implicit within contemporary understandings of culture as ‘ways of living’, the earlier association between ‘high’ culture and ‘civilisation’ remains a powerful means of ordering peoples into moral hierarchies within modernity. One does not have to look far into the recent past to see a continuation of the logic of contrasting the ‘cultured’ with the ‘barbarous’.

It follows that the meanings carried by the portmanteau word ‘culture’ are closely tied to their material, discursive and collective assemblages. For example, Australian culture, depending on context, may refer to a national culture, the culture of ‘home’, Aboriginal culture, multi-cultures or imported British culture. Work culture may refer generally to work (as distinct from play) or to the culture of a particular workplace. Culture in some usages refers exclusively to ‘high’ culture. In other contexts it refers only to widely shared, ‘socially determined’ behaviours. The multiple institutions of governance – schools, police,

transport, prisons, hospitals, and so on, are associated with, and are productive of, particular cultures. In part because of these multiple and competing 'cultures', governmental projects initially conceptualise culture as "broad and anthropological ... where culture is described as a 'way of life'" (Hultman, 2007: 324), identifiable with a particular group and characterised by distinct practices and performances, qualities and attributes, which bind people together. The governmental conceptualisation of culture as bounded and discrete is decidedly spatial and tends to fix cultures "as already 'being in place'" (Hultman, 2007: 325), which can produce paradoxical effects as governance through culture is also envisaged to involve transformations of people and place.

Assembling culture: the 'cultural industry' and cultural festivals

Governmental rationalities of culture draw inspiration from the identification of culture as the totality of a 'way of life', a category of experience containing all the myriad connections amongst people and place. However, the mobilisation of culture as a strategic resource of governance is enacted through discrete 'cultural' formations that assemble together particular entities according to more pragmatic and normative definitions. One way that culture has been instrumentalised within governmental programmes is identified by the term the 'cultural industry', which is often defined narrowly as the arts industry – meaning all forms of art activity that yield an economic profit. Chris Gibson (2003: 202) has argued that the distinctiveness of the cultural industries stems less from the notion that "their products contain expressive qualities that others might lack (virtually all industries involve aesthetic judgements, design elements and textual discourse of one kind or another), but because they are *perceived to be cultural* in a distinct way". According to Gibson (2003: 202-203),

Such constructions rely on emphasising the 'nonroutine and noninstrumental dimensions of the creative activity' ... – the uncertain and unique expressions or artistic quests that are elevated above the mundane tasks involved in production ... Specific forms of value are attached to the creative component of 'cultural' industries – not least of which are the various forms of symbolic capital claimed and defended by those involved in film, art, music or fashion.

The mobilisation of culture via the culture industry has been given a particular inflection by a growing body of political and economic thought which identified 'creative' or 'cultural' economies as critical to the liberal governance of, in particular, cities, but also regions such as Tasmania (Florida, 2002). Competition between places for the 'creative classes' (Florida, 2005a, 2005b) and on the basis of their creative potential has been linked to governmental efforts to promote and construct places as distinctly 'cultured'. According to Hultman (2007: 319) "the emergence of place competition ... draws upon and reinforces a neoliberal regional development discourse ... where immaterial assets, such as creativity, tolerance and culture, are defined as economic, strategic resources and brought to the marketplace". For example, the governance of the cultural industries has mobilised culture in terms of the opportunities which the arts give for enhancing economic development, which might be especially useful in regions such as Tasmania, constructed as economically marginal and geographically peripheral. In addition, culture has come to be seen as a means to boost morale by reflecting or otherwise responding to the contingent geographical, historical and political circumstances and associated 'materials-to-hand' of the communities concerned. A region's culture has come to be understood as both a source for the cultural industries output – in terms of the distinct 'produce' expressed by the region – and the basis for which new arrangements amongst culture, economy and governance might be assembled.

In Australia, attesting to how regional culture has become a critical aspect of Australia's economy during the past twenty to thirty years are, *inter alia*, the small farmers' markets that have sprung up in many towns; the regional branding of produce such as wine, honey, cheese, cream and beef; the craft shops that have proliferated in small tourist towns; the playing out of regionalism in the heritage sector, the rise in tourism (and its adoption of the term 'cultural' tourism), and the constant arrival of new local history publications on the stands of town 'Information Centres' (Banks *et al.*, 2007; Barnes *et al.*, 2006; Baum, 2006; George, 2008; Gibson, 2001; Tonts and Haslam-McKenzie, 2005; Walmsley, 2003).

The growth of cultural festivals has been one important site and phenomenon for both capitalising on the distinctive cultural qualities of a place and for engendering in the people of that place an introspective appreciation of their cultural distinctiveness as a

resource (Atkinson and Laurier, 1998; Bendrups, 2008; Bossen, 2000; Duffy, 2000; Ekman, 1999; Getz, 1991, 1995; Kapferer, 1994; Lavalley and Lafond, 1998; Lee, 2001; Markwell and Waitt, 2009; O'Sullivan and Jackson, 2002; Selberg, 2006; Shin, 2004; Slater, 2007; Waterman, 1998; Willems-Braun, 1994). Festivals as cultural performances have a long history. For example, the most popular and famous of the Greek festivals during the halcyon years of the sixth and fifth centuries BC were those that riotously celebrated the god Dionysus. Despite (or perhaps because of) a prevailing sense that contemporary societies are dominated by processes of secularisation, rationality and industrialisation, "since the 1970s, the number of public celebrations has actually been increasing in the western world" (Selberg, 2006: 297). In Australia, Gibson *et al.* (2010) have noted that myriad diverse festivals, including cultural, sporting, musical and culinary (to name a few), now represent an industry larger than agriculture in terms of the number of people employed. Increasingly, arts festivals are "a ubiquitous phenomenon in western culture" — "no esoteric aesthetic", they "have become events of sociological and geographical concern" (Waterman, 1998: 55).

According to Stanley Waterman (1998: 55), "arts festivals contribute to both the production and consumption of culture". Art has come to be regarded as an important political vehicle for constituting collectives and communicating information. Claire Bishop (2006: 179) has identified the increased importance of "socially-engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art" to the formation of varied forms of collectivity, often in the name of community development (see also Kwon, 2004). As a type of such collaborative art practices, arts festivals are also popular means by which numerous private and public institutions communicate their 'message' to relevant audiences. Academic accounts of arts festivals have tended to treat their effect on cultural and economic formations separately from their entertainment value, even while festivals have become a business like any other. For Waterman (1998: 59):

Festivals in general are never impromptu or improvised events, and arts festivals, in particular, are never spontaneous; they are 'serious fun'... They are controlled – rigorously planned by a group of directors and producers who arrange programmes

for audiences to hear and see, invite artists to perform them, decide on venues at which they will take place, and otherwise act as gatekeepers.

The organisation of arts festivals is likewise a key part of governmental interventions in and through culture, especially so as: “Cultural production is channelled through gatekeepers, individuals in a range of settings who manage and promote certain flows of sounds, images, words and commodities” (Gibson, 2003: 205). Festivals are large-scale, hybrid economic forms which academic attention is beginning to identify, elucidate and understand.

The literature on contemporary festivals has sometimes identified a tension between the requirement of festivals to attract and entertain tourists and their role in the formation and celebration of collective community, regional and/or national identities (Bossen, 2000). Notwithstanding these tensions, festival organisers see the double function of festivals – to attract tourists and serve as community celebrations – as synergistic. It would appear from historical analyses of festivals that collectives have long used festivals for similar synergistic effect, drawing outsiders into a shared ‘dialogic’ performance that serves to highlight and celebrate social codes and hierarchies, often by mischievously overturning the very codes they celebrate (Bakhtin, 1984). Fredric Jameson (1988: 127) noted the possibility for festivals, which, as “the saturnalian celebration of a whole community, have precisely the value *for us today* of standing in accusation of our own social life”. Festivals continue to be gatherings through which distinct regional or localised identities are promoted, performed and reflected upon. A festival’s diverse cultural expressions – performances of art, craft, place, food, etc – are accessible to observers and participants at many different levels. For some, festivals will be an opportunity for self-display, for others they provide an opportunity to engage with a range of diverse issues or protest about existing economic, social, or political conditions. Even the ability to stage a ‘successful’ cultural celebration is taken as a positive outcome for many communities (Lavallee and Lafond, 1998).

The conceptualisation of culture within governance as a ‘way of life’ is drawn from sociological and anthropological accounts that see culture as all-encompassing. For governance, an expansive, though bounded, concept of culture implies that the

governmental ambitions and imagined outcomes for culture are equally wide-reaching. Hence, the entities (peoples, places, objects) that are drawn into specific cultural formations are diverse and heterogeneous, and have a multiplicity of agential effects. The acceptance of diversity results in the possibility for a whole host of different threads to be woven together into specifically 'cultural' governmental programs, such as an arts festival. The enactments of governmental imaginaries of culture, in their performance amongst a range of diverse places, peoples and practices, are destined to have unpredictable and ambivalent consequences.

The idea that culture could have far-reaching effects and act upon many different features of life was apparent in the awkward conjunction of governance and culture that crystallised in the development of a major cultural festival for Tasmania. Critically, two processes converged. On the one hand, the history of framing both Tasmanians and Tasmania as a problem pointed towards possibilities of intervening into the Tasmanian problem on the basis of culture; for the notion of a Tasmanian 'culture' seemed to identify and give legitimate voice to the distinctiveness of Tasmanian 'resistance' to disciplinary modes of governance. On the other hand, transformations in governmental rationalities, especially those typified by the re-working of 'community' and 'region'/'place', further underscored the salience of figuring Tasmanians as islanders and Tasmania as an island. In a discussion of the attractiveness of community to advanced liberal governance, Rose (1999: 172-173) makes explicit the link between community and culture. Community

is a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of emotional relationships through which individual identities are constructed through their bonds to micro-cultures of values and meanings. 'Community', says Etzioni, 'is defined by two characteristics: first a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that criss-cross and reinforce one another ... and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, to a particular culture.' And it is through the political objectification and instrumentalisation of this community and its 'culture' that government is to be re-invented.

The mobilisation of culture within governmental programmes is related to a modernist conception of culture as a domain of life distinct from, for example, 'society' or 'nature'. 'Culture' represents a distinct, valid and authentic form of knowledge of the relations between people and place. The 'truth' of culture is taken to be the whole performance of a place and people, an intricate binding of sub-cultures within a community that is diversely connected in place, and discernible through various material and semiotic practices. This political rationality of culture is characteristic to the distinctive form of liberal government that Foucault characterised as being concerned with "a complex of men and things" ([1978] 1991a: 93). Bennett *et al.* (2007: 535) noted the links between the birth of the self-governing subject and the multiple domains of civil life, such as culture, that characterised liberalism:

One of the most significant of those fields was culture, which was coming to be seen as a discrete sphere, whose purpose was both to civilise the individual and to provide them with the means of civilising themselves. Yet, whatever the role played by this understanding of culture in the historical development of the practices of liberal government, it was a limited one when seen in the wider context of the new cultural-material environments that comprised an integral component of new ways of arranging and governing through freedom.

The idea of utilising culture as a discrete sphere of experience to influence the formation of subjectivities has also been given impetus by anthropological and sociological understandings that the economic, the political and the social are intertwined in 'culture' (Castree, 2004). In a process that Dean (1999) refers to more generally as 'regimes of practices', culture has been rendered technical through interactions and negotiations amongst experts and political authorities. One means by which culture has been mobilised is through notions of 'art', especially in so far as art is taken to establish particular links with culture on the basis of 'freedom':

The work of art, in inducing a free play of the imagination and the understanding that is not dictated by any determinate concept or rule, serves to symbolise the freedom – the self-governance that is voluntary – which, for Kant, is the essence of morality. In this way, to recall Rose's formulations, an 'aesthetics of existence' that is founded on this experience is located in a space that has been cleared to one side of morality,

knowledge and the law, while the only teleology that it is folded into is that of its own becoming (Bennett *et al.*, 2007: 536).

The conjunction between art's address of culture through 'freedom' and the performance, marketing and promotion of art is neatly summed up in the term 'culture industry'. In so far as the cultural industries represented new opportunities for governance that explicitly linked culture to economic considerations, the retrieval of an ancient idea of collectivity contained in cultural festivals provided a means by which to evoke 'culture' as what needed to be acted upon and through.

The focus of the twentieth-century governmental inquiries was on administrative and economic reform; the tone was dry and disciplinary, non-emotive and rational. The aims of the twenty-first century Bacon Government remained the same but the tone in which they were expressed was more emotive and open, marking a significant shift of register towards a broader exploration of the idea and the experience of Tasmania as an island. Tasmanian economies were certainly experiencing a revitalisation marked by regional trends in production (Gralton and Vanclay, 2005). Tasmanian wines and specific vigneron soon moved to the top ranks of Australian wines, King Island cheeses and cream, Tasmanian salmon, beef, leatherwood honey, were successfully branded on the basis of their island-determined status (Khamis, 2007). In cultural industry sectors of tourism, heritage, art and literature, also, there were signs that Tasmanians were not immune to the idea of an economic revival led by the exploitation of islandness. Like other peripheral and resource dependent sub-national island jurisdictions around the world, new opportunities seemed to present themselves at the turn of the twenty-first century, especially around the possibility of finally capitalising on those characteristics that had previously been assessed as handicaps to development (Baldacchino, 2004c, 2005b, 2006b, 2006c; Baldacchino and Milne, 2006, 2008; Bartmann, 1996, 1997, 2006; McElroy and Pearce, 2006; Oostindie, 2006; Stratford, 2006a).

The Tasmanian cultural festival that emerged from deliberations and negotiations between and among arts organisations, tourism representatives, business and government, ended up containing a raft of imagined possibilities for what an arts festival might be able to achieve for the island-State. Within strictly 'economic' or 'cultural' expectations *Ten Days*

on the Island was firmly aligned to revaluing regionalism and the governmental goal of resolving the ‘Tasmanian problem’. It is towards unpacking this critical shift in the trajectory of utilising island as a political rhetoric within the register of culture that I now turn.

(3) A major cultural festival for Tasmania

During the 1998 State election campaign both Labor and Liberal parties had adopted a ‘major cultural festival’ as part of their arts policy agenda. An inquiry into the possibility of Tasmanians staging a festival was already well underway⁸⁷ when Bacon was sworn in as Premier on 14th September 1998. Having created ‘State Development’ as a new “mega department” to oversee industrial development – and for which he was also Minister (McCall, 1999a: 299) – on 30th September 1998, Bacon then received a report by the ‘Major Cultural Festival Taskforce’ (MCFT). This report had been produced by the MCFT⁸⁸ in conjunction with Anthony Steel, an arts consultant and “former director of many festivals around Australia, including those of Adelaide and Sydney” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 1). Their (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 1) terms of reference had been to

research and prepare a Report ... which will advise the State Government on a strategic direction for a major cultural festival, taking into account cultural, tourism and potential economic benefits for Tasmania. The festival strategy should be uniquely Tasmanian and attractive to visitors to this State and a broad section of the local community.

⁸⁷ Sue Napier, former Liberal Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts, Sport and Recreation in the Tony Rundle Liberal minority Government, had been instrumental in instigating and pushing for a major cultural festival (Parliament of Tasmania, 1999a).

⁸⁸ The MCFT was Chaired by the Mayor of Launceston John Lees, with members consisting of: Tony Stacey (General Manager Blundstone Ltd.); John Kestl (Kestl & Company, a local events management business); Mike Ryan (General Manager Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart); Anne Warwick (Former General Manager Theatre Royal, Hobart); Malcolm Wells (Director Strategic Projects, Tourism Tasmania); Gillian Miles (Events Consultant, Tasmanian Development and Resources); and Lynne Smith (Manager, Arts Tasmania). Typical of Tasmania’s concentrated mix of cultural, governmental and business leaders and interests, what in the political arena was referred to as a “politics of personality, region and brokerage” (Sharman, 1977: 15; see also Chapman *et al.*, 1986; Herr, 1984), the reason for the inclusion of some members may not be immediately apparent. For example, Toney Stacey, as well as being the General Manager of Blundstone (an iconic Tasmanian footwear manufacturer), was also the Chairman of the Theatre Royal Management Board and heavily involved in Brand Tasmania. On face value, however, the membership of the MCFT reflects competing/converging interests in local government, business, tourism and the arts.

Responses from members of the Tasmanian public to the idea of a major cultural festival led the authors to write that while there was “very diverse opinions on the exact nature of such an event, usually proffered from a point of view of self-interest” there was “virtually no opposition to the idea of a festival of some kind” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 2). That report became the pivotal document which directed the development of Tasmania’s first major cultural festival. In Parliament, Bacon reported that he agreed “with most of the recommendations” of the *MCFT/Steel Report* and noted that “I do believe that the cultural industries in Tasmania have a great importance for the development of the State” (Parliament of Tasmania, 1998). The importance of the *MCFT/Steel Report* was initially evident from structural similarities between that report and *Ten Days on the Island*; supported from interviews with MCFT members; and upheld from interviews with festival organisers. The report detailed a number of outcomes that a “successful arts festival” would achieve for Tasmania and linked those outcomes to a recommended design for the festival. The outcomes included (MCFT/Steel, 1988: 3):

- fulfil and underpin the Brand Tasmania goals, particularly in the furtherance of design and innovation, vitality, creativity, originality
- yield long-term benefits which might become evident only after four or five festivals
- act as a catalyst, through its nature as a statewide festival, for the weakening of parochialism that is perceived as being inherent in Tasmania
- help raise self-esteem amongst Tasmanians and engender pride in the State’s achievements
- increase tourism to Tasmania as a destination
- increase media attention on the state
- provide new opportunities for Tasmanian artists
- by all these means demonstrate a social and economic benefit to the community through business and community growth.

Below, I discuss these anticipated outcomes in relation to how an arts festival was envisaged as a means to address the Tasmanian problem through the register of ‘culture’.

Branding Tasmania

First in the list of outcomes that a successful arts festival would deliver was to “fulfil and underpin the Brand Tasmania goals, particularly in the furtherance of design and innovation, vitality, creativity, originality” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 3). The notion that an international arts festival could achieve such ends referred, in one sense, to a standard idea that the arts are inherently concerned with ‘innovation’, ‘creativity’, and ‘design’. In this sense, a festival that showcased Tasmanian artistic creations would reflect

the innovative side of Tasmania, of Brand Tasmania and of the significant number of industries and entrepreneurs who are of world class in small niche areas of endeavour, [and] it will meet the requirement of being ‘uniquely Tasmanian’ (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 6).

It would only do so by switching from innovation and excellence in art to the broader field of what was innovative and excellent in Tasmania’s niche ‘industries’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ ventures (a field that might include the arts). Linking the arts festival to the branding of Tasmania also related to a generalised framing of Tasmanian ‘culture’ as the outcome of an authentic and unique connection between place and people:

Brand is all about two things: it’s about place and people. Now the place we all know; beautiful, pretty sort of ideal as far as climate goes and that sort of stuff, and the people, it’s the ingredient that a lot of people forget about but it’s just as, it’s vital really, because without people you would have nothing else (Int008).

The “cultural inheritance and ethos” (Int019) that flowed from islandness had created for Tasmania an authentic “point of difference and uniqueness” (Int018), according to another member of Brand Tasmania. Island distinctiveness was thought to give Tasmania a distinct advantage over the other states of Australia, with their larger, multi-cultural and mobile populations and their ‘arbitrary’ and ‘politically-imposed’ boundaries and borders. Thus Tasmanian culture was used to refer to a process in which particular qualities and attributes derived from Tasmania’s ‘island mystique’. According to the Chairman of Brand Tasmania (Int019), living on an island meant that

you had to be innovative, you had to be creative, you had to be resourceful. And I think they are very important elements, and it’s almost traditional in island communities,

wherever you go. There's this element of resourcefulness. Here it certainly translates into creativity and innovation. And it doesn't matter what sort of level you are looking at, whether you are looking at the arts, whether you are looking at education, whether you're looking at food and beverage, high value added produce, you know, there's a lot of things happening here that are extremely creative and very successful. And it's not an accident. I believe it's part of the culture and ethos that develops over a century or more in an island-State.

The substantive link between an international arts festival for Tasmania and Brand Tasmania is that both envisage 'island' as a pivotal geographical identifier by which Tasmania will be transformed. For Brand Tasmania, this notion is expressed in terms of 'island mystique', and by the way that Tasmania's island status confers upon the place and the people a series of qualities and attributes that allows Tasmania to positively distinguish itself from other combinations of places and peoples. In the past, the island-determined character of Tasmania's population was perceived as a problem. Recast as an authentic culture, the Tasmanian community is re-positioned as 'innovative', 'creative' and 'resourceful'. While the *MCFT/Steel Report* (1998: 5) recommended that "an arts festival of national significance be established in Tasmania and that it be called the Tasmanian Festival", it justified this moniker in no small part on the basis of Tasmania's "island character" (1998: 4), arguing that Tasmanian islandness was one critical attribute that made "it an excellent site for a smaller, carefully curated arts program".

Weakening parochialism

Notwithstanding the report's assertion that those "festivals which work best artistically are those that are staged in compact cities or definable regions", one of its key recommendations was "that the Tasmania Festival, within budgetary limitations, be a state-wide celebration held in five or six different locations around the state, with only Hobart and Launceston always hosting some program items" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 2, 6). While a central rationale for this structure was that Tasmania was highly decentralised with well-defined and distinct communities, the authors also imagined that a festival, would "act as a catalyst, through its nature as a statewide festival, for

the weakening of the parochialism that is perceived as being inherent in Tasmania” (1998: 3).

The shifts of register between regional and state-wide communities that characterised governmental discourse through the twentieth century can be seen in the *MCFT/Steel Report*. The assessment that Tasmanian parochialism is a problem, resulting in division and antagonism between the various ‘communities’ and threatening to rip apart the collective coherence of the island-state, is a familiar one:

Richard Flanagan: People need to see and understand what project it is that we as a people are embarked upon. And this project needs to be inclusive. One of the legacies of the 80s politics, of Robin Gray, was that we were divided. We were divided into North and South, into urban poofters and country rednecks. Everyone hated everybody else for all the wrong reasons.

Nick Evers: That’s been a problem for a long time.

Richard Flanagan: Yeah, there’s been a history of parochialism. But it turned into something a fair bit nastier and I don’t think it’s been entirely healed (cited in Croome, 1997c: 158).

On the other hand, the involvement of those communities *and* the Tasmanian community was thought to be critical to a festival’s staging. The report noted that successful festivals were ones “that were initiated from within the community or after considerable consultation with the community” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 2), and specifically, Tasmania’s advantage as a site for a festival was thought to rest on

the possibility, particularly in view of the decentralised nature of the population, of involving whole communities in particular program items and enabling them to claim ownership of them, thereby cementing the relationship between the festival and the broad Tasmanian community (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 5).

Differences between regional and State points of view were again covered over rather than resolved when the details of where a festival should be performed were assessed. Thus, one of Tasmania’s advantages as a festival site was

the easy access to unconventional venues: it could easily be claimed that all performances will be staged and exhibitions mounted at interesting locations and/or interesting buildings (e.g. the new concert hall and the royal tennis court in Hobart, the Exhibition Building at Inveresk, Port Arthur, Strahan, apple sheds, wineries, oast houses, Ross) (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 5).

The equivalence between the locations and buildings, chosen on the basis of their being of one 'interesting' type, elides a festival's purpose of showing what was distinctive in each of the places. Slippages occurred frequently in the use of the word parochial. Sometimes, parochialism was said to characterise *internal* divisions among Tasmanians that split communities, regions and places. At other times parochialism referred to Tasmania *externally* as a whole. The notion that the entire island was parochial was especially the case when art was discussed in the *MCFT/Steel Report* (1998: 6):

There has been much talk of the need to make the programs 'uniquely Tasmanian'. It is entirely correct to suggest that the Festival must have a distinct personality, a character of its own, an artistic integrity. This is what so many of the bigger festivals, notably those of Sydney and Melbourne, singularly lack. They can perhaps sustain their programs despite an absence of individuality, due to the critical mass of population and the need in any case, within or without a festival, for a wide variety of entertainment to be available in such cities. A Tasmanian Festival will, however, be judged, and rightly so, much more critically.

Nevertheless, the notion of a program being 'uniquely Tasmanian' is artistically dangerous, pushing the programmers into a corner, or at best a mould, which could be inhibiting and would finally be seen as parochial. The best way to achieve the desired goals is though an insistence by the stakeholders on the highest possible standards and an acute awareness by the programmers that they are mounting a festival in Tasmania, with all the underlying connotations of that context.

It wasn't clear from the report exactly what the authors meant by their reference to 'all the underlying connotations of that context', though it did seem to refer to Tasmanian social, political and cultural life. However, and notwithstanding that the vast majority of arts festivals around Australia draw on artistic talents from outside their immediate geographical areas, it was clear that a critical problem existed in terms of a festival being

‘uniquely’, ‘distinctly’, and ‘characteristically’ Tasmanian. This problem was that the ‘artistic integrity’ of Tasmanian arts had already been conceived within the Steel/MCFT Report as ‘artistically dangerous’, ‘inhibiting’ and ‘parochial’. And while it would be extraordinary for any major arts festival in Australia to insist on only ‘local’ talent, especially given the extent to which contemporary arts festivals are understood as celebrations and performances of diverse cultures within global economic imperatives and trajectories, such a framing did present Tasmanian art (and artists) as inherently parochial, even while it vaunted their island individuality against the critical masses of mainland Australia.

One solution proposed by the report to the conundrum of Tasmanian art being uniquely Tasmanian was the maintenance of the ‘highest possible standards in programming’, and suggested that a festival’s aims could be realised only by a strong curatorial hand: “the artistic director must have the firmness required to abide by these high standards and resist the inevitable unsolicited approaches from inappropriate amateur or ‘pro-am’ groups and individuals” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 6). There, however, the slippage was again from a festival ‘uniquely Tasmanian’ in terms of its wider ‘culture’ to the perception that Tasmanian artists and their art would pose a problem for the organisers.

Concerns with Tasmanian art appearing parochial were inflected through recommendations about staffing. The role of artistic director, responsible for framing the program and sourcing the performers, constituted a critical position that would “have to be filled from interstate”, as it was deemed likely that no local candidate of international repute was available. By contrast, it was decided that the position of general manager, responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation, *should* be filled by a Tasmanian. And why this geographical division of labour?

The two key roles are those of Artistic Director and General Manager. It needs to be accepted that the former position is likely to have to be filled from interstate. A person of the highest degree of experience and credibility is needed for this crucial role. She or he will preferably have had previous experience at programming a festival (or could be a distinguished individual artist without such experience but with a wide network of contacts) and must be able to act as the public face of the Festival and be a passionate

advocate of the program. If an expatriate Tasmanian turns out to be the best person for the job, so much the better ...

The full time General Manager, CEO of the Company, should be a Tasmanian broadly familiar with the arts in the State as well as the business, community and political sectors, able to provide for the Artistic Director an efficient, informed and supportive context for the successful implementation of the program. A critical component of this role will be the development of a successful strategy for sponsorship, either by the CEO or through the engagement of a staff member or consultant (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 9).

Thus, the *MCFT/Steel Report* sought a resolution of the problem of Tasmanian parochialism by suggesting that it would be parochial for Tasmanians to think their festival would be able to compete with those of other Australian states if the programs were set by a Tasmanian director who did not have a high professional standing internationally, and if events were performed solely by Tasmanians. It would be parochial in two ways: in assuming that the State's performers and a Tasmanian director would be able to match the professionalism and pull of the performers drawn from around the world for the festivals of Melbourne and Sydney. And notwithstanding Premier Bacon's assertion that islands produced more creative talents than continental areas, it would be parochial to assume that Tasmania could produce more than a small number of great performers at any one time. To achieve the stated goals of a festival – to be uniquely Tasmanian and attract international press coverage – it would be best for the organisers to ensure top quality performances, by people drawn mainly from outside the State, and to have them focus on the place where they perform.

The tensions involved in the recommendation that a festival should be artistically produced by 'outsiders' was that the festival promised to celebrate Tasmanian culture as art, to realise the idea of being initiated from within the community, and show the island as performing what was 'uniquely Tasmanian'.⁸⁹ The management of people and the

⁸⁹ I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that this account of the problematic framing of Tasmanian parochialism could be read as a defensive argument that only Tasmanians should participate as artists or as organisers. This is not the intended tenor of the argument. Audiences enjoy and demand artistic creations sourced from afar and arts festivals all over the world are managed by mobile arts industry professionals. Hence, I recognise that similar recommendations to those made in the *Steel/MCFT Report* are common to arts festivals the world over (Waterman, 1998). Here I am identifying that the specific solution to the framing of an

organisation of places to bring a festival into the island's several communities, required a Tasmanian who could work through the variegated and internally complex landscape of Tasmanian culture, secure sponsorship, deal with 'business, community and political sectors', and so 'implement the program'.⁹⁰

Raise self-esteem and engender pride

In the *The Nixon Report* 'Tasmanians' were framed as a central element of the Tasmanian problem. Nixon (1997: 18) diagnosed a "general malaise" that characterised Tasmanians, a lack of confidence in their own abilities and widespread pessimism about their futures. This appraisal was also evident in other places. For example, Flanagan (cited in Croome, 1997c: 138, 139) pointed out: "There's this belief that to be Tasmanian is to be mediocre" and this "place disenfranchises its best". However, Flanagan sheeted home the blame for that belief to Tasmanian governments, rather than seeing it as characteristic of 'Tasmanians', although that had the effect of making 'government' responsible for the confidence and self-belief of 'Tasmanians'. Thus, Flanagan looked to government:

What we need from government is clear. There needs to be espoused a political vision of hope, and part of that vision must be re-instilling the confidence of the Tasmanian people. That they are not mediocre. The second thing that's needed is a vision of what Tasmania will be like in fifty years (cited in Croome, 1997c: 157-158).

Certainly, the history of governmental inquiries analysed in the previous chapter identified Tasmanians as problematic and requiring transformation; this was especially apparent in so far as people relate to place and thus constitute a distinctive 'culture'. Thus, one outcome of a cultural festival would be to "help raise self-esteem amongst Tasmanians and engender pride in the State's achievements" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 3). The Greens' politician Christine Milne (1993: 35) had already imputed a link between a lack of personal confidence and a failure to value the place:

internal incoherence in the policy of distinctiveness is for Tasmania's major cultural festival to be rebadged around the trope of 'island', a transmutation that is described later in this chapter.

⁹⁰ As it turned out, neither the position of Artistic Director nor that of General Manager was filled by 'Tasmanians'.

Another problem which emerges from Tasmania's lack of confidence in ourselves is the failure to value what is part and parcel of our everyday lives, and to imagine that for our small towns to be of interest to tourists, new tourist developments have to be built.

However, in attempting to address Tasmanian self-esteem and confidence, the *MCFT/Steel Report* unwittingly reinforced assessments that Tasmanians were lacking by suggesting that the island's artists would be seen as parochial.

Tasmanian parochialism was also apparent in the notion that the project of importing performers of international repute to Tasmania would be problematic as Tasmanian art audiences were 'backward':

Tasmanians are known for their sometimes strong resistance to change and it will be a challenge for the festival to produce a program which is acceptable to that part of the population which has some interest in the arts, whether latent or declared, whilst insisting on the maintenance of high standards of artistic integrity (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 7).

As noted previously there has been a long history of tying Tasmania's bundle of economic, demographic and political problems to normative concerns about the collective and individual mental health of 'Tasmanians'. In what, in many ways was an intriguing aetiological diagnosis of Tasmanian ills, Lacanian-inspired political scientist David Patman (2001: 25) put 'Tasmania on the couch':

If Tasmania were in psychoanalysis, its therapist might be struck by symptoms bearing some similarity to cases of paranoid-schizophrenia. There is the same splitting of the world into pieces or 'part-objects' ... the paranoid-schizophrenic world is a closed system: inside contains what is comfortable, known, what is 'right'. Outside is unknown territory, dangerous, wrong ... In Tasmania we have our own brands of closed and divisive thinking: North-South parochialism, the conservation movement versus the mining and forestry industries, gay and lesbian versus straight, old against young, etc. All these divisions, however, are a function of, or at least exaggerated by, an even greater and more concrete separation: that of the island of Tasmania from 'mainland' Australia, and from the rest of the world.

Similar division in other societies are not seen as dividing a whole community, probably because the edges of those communities are not seen as so sharply defined by islandness. Patman (2001: 25) went on to contend that “unfortunately it appears that this closed and paranoid culture permeates all aspects and levels of Tasmanian society”. The solution lay, literally, in the psychoanalysis of the entire population:

The analyst provides a ‘reflective space’ for the patient to examine and explore their own feelings and thought processes. In this way, thought patterns and behaviour can be worked on so that the patient can be more aware and thus have more control over them. In a similar way, I think it is possible to construct a reflective space for Tasmania, in which its culture, ways of doing things and its relationship with its environment can be observed and analysed. Such a ‘space’ could take many forms, but would need to be able to embrace social, cultural and economic issues, as well as providing links to other communities with similar interests and problems (2001: 25).

In a governmental critique of ego-psychology, Barbara Cruikshank (1996: 231) concluded that “there is nothing personal about self-esteem”. This binding of the political to the personal, and both to a remembered lineage that is perceived as being repeated in the present, has long been a feature of Tasmanian social life and a source of worry for formal accounts of the island-State’s politics.⁹¹ It now found new expression in the governmental initiation of an international arts festival. Art has often been theorised (most famously by Freud) as a safe way for playing out the dramas and agonies of life. A film about cops and robbers involves viewers vicariously: we rob and run, chase, capture, imprison or kill, and savagely rejoice. Watching a performance of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* we participate emotively in the conundrum of wisdom, power and old age. Art, as play, is envisaged to open a space for reflection about ‘the human condition’. The development of a major arts

⁹¹ Russ Hinze, former Queensland politician, ‘father of the modern Gold Coast’ and central figure in the Fitzgerald Inquiry investigating Queensland Police corruption, famously responded to a question about whether owning hotels and racehorses conflicted with his ministerial portfolios of racing and liquor licensing: ‘That’s not a conflict of interest, that’s a convergence of interest!’. Similar tensions between appraisals of ‘corruption’ and ‘convergence’ are routinely apparent in Tasmanian social, political and economic life (Beresford, 2010; Hay, 1977). It is difficult to determine the extent to which accusations of ‘corruption’, ‘nepotism’ and ‘patronage’ assist in understanding that complex sociality, as those appraisals often appear too strident and invested with assumptions of a necessarily ‘modern’ separation of ‘powers’ that is unable to adequately name the effects of extended familial networks and ties, or the extent to which that social complexity is itself a certain kind of ‘authentic’ resource to justify dubious ‘convergences’, or whether the accusation is primarily directed by one disaffected group against another.

festival for Tasmania could bring together Patman's desire for a space within which Tasmania can undertake analysis and thus address the problem of self-esteem:

A festival program of this kind [with "elements of risk and adventure"] will provide opportunities for Tasmanians to broaden and extend their experience of the arts in ways that are otherwise unavailable to them unless they travel interstate. It will also help to raise the self-esteem of the population and engender pride in the State's achievements (MCFT/ Steel, 1998: 7).

As the editorial of the *Company Director Magazine* (AICD, 2001: 2) noted: "A lot of thought in the Bacon administration goes into altering perceptions of Tasmania, modernising the economy and lifting morale and expectations of the community".

Attract tourists

The opportunity for self-reflection offered by an arts festival was awkwardly combined with presenting Tasmania, Tasmanians and their 'distinctive culture' as consumable experiences for tourists. Never far below the surface in the development of Tasmania's arts festival were the interests of the tourism industry, and the extent to which tourism more generally could provide a model for a festival as well as an economic justification for government expenditure. This concern is apparent from the makeup of the MCFT, where tourism representation (both business and government) outweighed the interests of Tasmanian arts and artists. It was also apparent in the outcomes set for a festival, which "must drive the tourist potential which exists in the State" and "increase tourism to Tasmania as a destination" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 7 and 3). The festival was initially housed within tourism in State Government, and key aspects of the structure of the festival were oriented to serving the interests of tourism. One instance in the *MCFT/Steel Report* (1998: 3) is the suggestion that a key determinant for when to stage a festival would be a season "when tourism figures are currently low".

The idea that tourist places and peoples are 'produced' to be 'consumed' has long been recognised within various literatures associated with tourism (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2002; Berno, 1999; Callahan, 1998; Carter, 2008; Edensor, 2000; Jetson, 1993; Urry, 1990, 1995). Traditionally, the marketing and promotion of Tasmania as a tourist destination can be

seen as resting on three constructions: (1) Tasmania's natural values, and especially its beautiful and untouched 'wilderness' and its temperate climate; (2) Tasmania's 'clean and green' produce, and especially fine foods and wines; and (3) the island's heritage and culture. There appeared to be many easily accessible instances of Tasmanian 'heritage', which was encapsulated materially in numerous surviving colonial buildings and a state-wide penal infrastructure. In the 1980s Kay Daniels (1983: 3) noted that the new economies of tourism were already transmuting Tasmanian history:

Tasmania is a society which is still uncomfortable with its convict past, which sees its history as in some ways marked by a shameful inheritance ... The past which is too awful to contemplate, must be made to earn, to work, to create income and profits, to create employment. The great liability must be turned into an asset. What has been most hidden and most despised must be turned into a spectacle. Tasmania must make a cult of its past.

However the idea of Tasmanian 'culture' had long represented a problem for marketing the island to tourists. The creation of a festival that celebrated Tasmanian culture through the sign of art sought to solve that problem. Thus, while an arts festival would respond to the idea that Tasmanians needed to further develop "special interest tourism" in order to realise the "enormous opportunities for combining art, literature and music with the natural landscape" (Milne, 1993: 36), a festival was primarily conceptualised by government tourist representatives as a way to make Tasmanian culture attractive to tourists. Thus, a

smaller, carefully curated, concentrated arts program ... [would be an] opportunity to promote Tasmania as a tourist destination for such an event, with the more obvious and conventionally promoted attractions of the State (environment, lifestyle, food and wine) as well-known and widely appreciated add-ons (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 5).

Indeed, the festival was conceptualised by government tourist representatives as a 'marketing vehicle' for the general promotion of the State, rather than necessarily resulting in large numbers of tourists visiting specifically for the festival's artistic values (Int004, Int005). The combination of the two brought together both people and place as consumable under the combined signs of art and tourism. The suggested optimal temporal scale for a

festival – “ten days, starting on a Friday and ending on the Sunday ten days later, taking in six weekend days on which the bulk of the program could be staged” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 3) – also reflected a desire to position a festival as a readily accessible tourist experience. Thereby Tasmania was to be “mobilised as cultural good[s] to be enjoyed and consumed” (Amin and Thrift, 2007: 151).

The double appeal of an arts festival that was packaged as exotic tourism – as was clearly advertised in the festival’s eventual title, *Ten Days on the Island* – plus the recommendation that the Artistic Director should be a person of international reputation who would attract performers of high quality, was seen to guarantee that a festival would attract national and perhaps international media attention. The idea of presenting ‘Tasmania’ doubly, from the inside for outside consumption, and from the outside for inside consumption, was designed to serve the dual and interrelated aims of governance to promote Tasmania internationally and enable Tasmanians an opportunity to develop self-esteem through engaging with art. It also made a cultural festival a political event of the entertaining, conceptual kind that is the meat and drink of journalism.

Opportunities for Tasmanian artists

There were no artist representatives on the MCFT, but a cultural festival was imagined to “provide new opportunities for Tasmanian artists” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 3). On the one hand supporting Tasmanian artists relates to the idea that the cultural industries represent new economic possibilities for Tasmania. The “Tasmanian arts industry” would be stimulated by the opportunities a festival provided “for Tasmanian artists to participate in the program and in workshops and master classes given by visiting artists” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 7). As such, a festival would contribute to the economic revitalisation of Tasmania by furthering the production of Tasmanian art. On the other hand, opportunities for Tasmanian artists were also imagined to exist in the ability of a festival to “reflect the innovative side of Tasmania and Tasmanians” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 7), especially in so far as it could highlight Tasmanian culture. Again, Flanagan (cited in Croome, 1997c: 141, 145) had been outspoken on what was at stake in the new ‘cultural industries’:

There is a misunderstanding about the new economy; that it's based on technology, but it's not. It's really based on culture. We should be doing what places like Ireland have done. They brought in policies aimed at getting up movie industries, record industries, TV. Our government should be talking to Mushroom Records, talking to Columbia Tristar, talking to Foxtel.

The argument about design can also be swung into publishing, movies, anything like that. It's about having a unique cultural fibre, one you can't get anywhere else. That's why people go and make movies in Ireland, that's why big bands record in Ireland. It's because people recognise that there's a different quality to doing work there and that's what we've got to create here.

A major cultural festival positioned art in terms of its ability to address and inform culture as a distinct 'way of life', involving the amalgam of art skills and culture. Making Tasmania and its culture/s the subject of a festival turned the island into a distinct spatiality to be acted upon and through by art. Artists were to be the vehicle by which government achieved its objective of shaping the conduct of Tasmanians.

Economic and social benefits

Economic benefits were deliberately mixed with social benefits in the rationale for the staging of a major cultural festival in Tasmania. Thus, one outcome of a successful cultural festival would be to "demonstrate a social and economic benefit to the community through business and community growth" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 3). It is notable how often social benefit was couched in traditional economic-political terms of governance, as synonymous with economic benefit. Some economic benefits were seen to result from taking the 'arts' within the ambit of the 'cultural industries'. Basically, the outcomes were assessed in terms of profit, loss and attendance:

If 3,500 tickets are sold to visitors from interstate at an average price of \$22 the box office income will benefit by \$77,000. At an average of six tickets per person this means some 600 interstate visitors, who might spend seven nights each in Tasmania. At a daily spend of \$200 each (similar to a convention visitor) the total spend would be \$840,000. Add to this the projected interstate sponsorship income of \$120,000 and the

total new money benefit of the first Festival would approach \$1 million (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 11).

Other economic benefits anticipated to stem from a festival were related to the multiplier effect of State Government arts expenditure. “For every \$1 committed through its Arts Tasmania Arts Grants Program, a total of \$4.64 in subsidies was provided by other tiers of government, the community and the private sector” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 11). As to the role a festival would play as an employer:

the festival would generate substantial new employment opportunities. The arts is⁹² a labour-intensive industry. Already, 5,759 people are employed in their first jobs in cultural industry in this State which is 3.2% of total Tasmanian employment. Part-time employment adds significantly to this figure. ABS figures show that 41,900 people in Tasmania are involved in full-time, part-time or volunteer capacity in the cultural industry (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 11).

Claims that a festival would benefit Tasmania ‘socially’ were invariably outlined in terms of bringing about a transformation of Tasmanian cultural life; though that too was oriented to the concerns of ‘industry’: “in the longer term an improved cultural climate will help attract industry to the State” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 12). The governmental imaginary that a celebration of Tasmanian culture through art would attract industries to the State echoed a discourse popular throughout the twentieth century, and was typified by a similar assertiveness.⁹³

The *MCFT/Steel Report* delineated the expected outcomes of a successful cultural festival for Tasmania and recommended a structure for a festival suited to those outcomes. The outcomes imagined for a festival represent a continuation of the long history of governmental dreams of overcoming the Tasmanian Problem through the ontological

⁹² The use of ‘the arts is’ rather than ‘the arts are’ points towards a transformation whereby ‘the arts’ become ‘an industry’, able to be spoken and written about as a singular ‘thing’ and hence open and amenable to instrumentalisation.

⁹³ Take, for example, the following, from a Tasmanian State Government brochure entitled *The Island State* circa late 1960s/early 1970s: “The low cost of electricity, supplied to big users under long term contracts, has attracted several large companies to the State. Among these are the producers of: zinc, newsprint, superphosphate, ammonium sulphate, Portland cement, fine paper, aluminium, calcium carbide, ferro-manganese. Tasmanian prices for electricity are the lowest in Australia and are uniform throughout the State” (Tasmanian Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade, circa 1960: n.p.).

transformation of Tasmania and Tasmanians. The governmental imaginary of culture names the complex interactions between people and place, while an arts festival represents the technical rendering of culture through which governance can 'act'.

One significant shift to the recommended design of a festival was made when Bacon hired Robyn Archer as Artistic Director (Parliament of Tasmania, 1999b). Working together they replaced 'The Tasmania Festival' with the working title of '*Ten Days on the Island*', effectively replacing Tasmania with 'island'. This substitution seemed to avoid many of the problems that were attached to the notion of Tasmanian culture, even while Tasmanian culture was to be celebrated in the festival. The solution resided in the possibility of replacing a specific place – 'Tasmania' – with a more abstract figure – 'island'. Indeed, the report (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 5) had noted that Tasmania had

the right 'feel' of an island as the site for a celebration of this kind, islands hold a unique fascination for many people and the Festival should exploit to the fullest extent possible Tasmania's status as an island of accessible size.

There was a precedent for that substitution. In 1981 the literary journal *The Tasmanian Review* changed its name to *Island Magazine*. In a brief explanation given for the change, editors Michael Denholm and Andrew Sant (1981: 1) suggested that the new title avoided the negative connotations – the parochialism – that clung to 'Tasmania':

Since the magazine began in June 1979 it has increased in size, scope and circulation. With this issue a new name has been adopted. *Island Magazine*. This continues to suggest the magazine's source but, we trust, without the previously unwarranted parochial connotations. Hope you like it!

Now, again, in the *Ten Days on the Island* festival, the time was right to positively value notions of islandness, even if Tasmania itself was still a little beyond the pale.

Conclusion

The governing programs brought to Tasmania in 1998 by its newly elected Bacon Labor Government mobilised both island and community. In a series of policy initiatives, the problematic framing of Tasmania as an island community was intensified. At the same

time, however, the administration introduced new actors and new institutions within governmental programs aimed at solving the Tasmanian problem. In particular, the Bacon Government seized upon an aspect of the Tasmanian problem often implicit in previous governmental inquiries, but explicit in popular representations of Tasmanian life; this was the assessment of Tasmanians as culturally backward, socially dysfunctional, and demographically inbred. This combination of characteristics has routinely been traced back through the State's history to its origins as a colonial island prison for Britain's worst offenders, who brought deadly diseases to the indigenous inhabitants, killed and exiled them, and established a lineage of closely intertwined, extended-familial and over-determinedly 'thick' social and work relations, the net-working of which, like all such familial systems, involved patronage, nepotism and corruption (see Hay, 1977).

In this chapter I have described how the Bacon Government conceived to address Tasmanians through entering these networks and, from inside, use them to arrest the State's economic, social and demographic decline. One of the means to effect this change was an international arts festival designed to celebrate Tasmania's island culture. The project responded to and ignored the past failure of Tasmania's 'island community' to adopt the sort of disciplinary reforms that required Tasmanians throw off their old mantle of resistant 'subjects' and adopt that of responsible 'citizens' (Cruikshank, 1996). Government turned to the technical deployment of culture (as art) as a means to effect a major change in Tasmanian subjectivities, Tasmanian geographies, and the relations between people and place.

In this governmental analysis of the conception of a major cultural festival for Tasmania I have explored how notions of 'culture' have been utilised within recent theorisations of government, and how the taking up of regionalism, islandness and the culture industry by governmental programs has formed new alignments among diverse social, cultural, material, economic and political entities. Islandness is increasingly seen less as a barrier to Tasmanian prosperity as a means of achieving development. In so far as Tasmanians can be assembled together under the sign of island, bonding as islanders, then they can solve their problems. Islandness can be a means of product differentiation in a world seen as

abandoning raw commodity mass markets⁹⁴ and embracing high quality 'place of origin branding'. Under those conditions, notwithstanding the tension that has come into 'islandness' with the lessening or obviating of the 'problem of access' by undersea pipelines, splendid ferries, and the internet, Tasmania's island status will be preserved as a powerful tool for attracting 'continental dwellers' as tourists and as new industries. Tasmania's lack of industrial development, which resulted in it keeping large tracts of 'wilderness', the haemorrhaging of its productive youth to the mainland which kept the population low, made 'Tasmanians Tasmanian' and preserved familial community structures, a historically depressed housing market, and the high proportion of colonial period buildings on the island, are now so many tools for the construction of an appealing island destination characterised by a distinctive 'way of life'. By a peculiar historical reversal, the very qualities that held Tasmania back were to become the source of its present and future prosperity.

The Bacon Government acted quickly on the recommendations of the *MCFT/Steel Report* to instigate a pilot major cultural festival for Tasmania in 2001. The key features of *Ten Days on the Island* were to be its focus on island themes, its sourcing of events from an international repertoire of island cultures, the inclusion of local Tasmanian artists in an international festival, and the placement of events in accordance with Tasmania's decentralised communities. These critical features responded to the governmental objectives of the festival, and projected forward into the working of the festival.

Moving out from these foundations, drawing on participant-observation, in-depth interviews with key respondents, and an analysis of festival material, both primary and secondary, in the following two chapters I trace the enactment and performance of islandness in the first two *Ten Days on the Island* festivals. I explore how the objectives of governance (to solve the Tasmanian problem) were translated into specific arts practices hosted by specific communities in specific places, and I examine how the festivals' assemblages of art, community and place variously merged with, modified, and ran against the governance objectives.

⁹⁴ In reality, both Tasmania and Australia remain heavily reliant on the export of raw commodities. As too are many 'less developed' countries around the world.

Chapter 5 - *Ten Days on the Island*: celebrating Tasmania's 'island culture'

Ten Days on the Island was a turning point for Tasmanians in engaging in a global cultural exchange of the most positive kind and seeing themselves as part of the global community of islands.

Premier of Tasmania, Jim Bacon, Personal correspondence 2003: n.p.

Introduction

Over ten days from 30th March to 8th April 2001, accompanied by much fanfare and excitement, Tasmanians hosted their first international arts festival (Figure 5-1).



Figure 5-1 *Ten Days on the Island* 2001 festival program front cover
(TDOTI, 2001a)

The inaugural *Ten Days on the Island*, more than any other cultural event to that point, placed ‘islandness’ at the centre of Tasmanian social, political and economic life. With sell-out audiences of over 100,000 people⁹⁵ and having attracted an estimated \$4.3 million in positive local, national and international coverage,⁹⁶ the festival was a box-office and media success (TDOTI, 2001b). Billed as a premier cultural experience, *Ten Days on the Island* was ‘like no other’ Australian or international festival in drawing on ‘islander artists’.

Islandness was celebrated by bringing together Tasmania’s talents and gifted artists with those from islands around the world, and by exploring island themes in art works.

Sourcing ‘island’ events from other islands as well as from Tasmania engaged Tasmanians in a celebration of the qualities and characteristics of island cultures. Islander performers and island exhibitions were specially selected by Artistic Director Robyn Archer,⁹⁷ who, as the 1998 and 2000 Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, one of the longest-running and pre-eminent art festivals in Australia, brought with her significant national and international cultural kudos. Festival events were carefully located, not only within Tasmania’s two major cities, Hobart in the south and Launceston in the north, but – reflecting the notion that the festival should be spread out around the island to match the island’s decentralised population – into many smaller towns, villages, communities and places (Figure 5-2).

⁹⁵ Overall attendance was 102,000. Events produced by *Ten Days on the Island* attracted approximately 45,000 people (24,394 to ticketed events and 21,070 to free events). Events not produced by *Ten Days on the Island* but included in the program attracted approximately 57,000 people (7,056 to ticketed events and 49,817 to free events) (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001d).

⁹⁶ Leading up to the 2001 *Ten Days on the Island* 20 interstate journalists visited and filed festival stories. During the festival another 20 journalists visited, with seven from overseas specifically sent to cover *Ten Days on the Island* (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001d).

⁹⁷ Robyn Archer was born in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1948. She began singing at an early age and by 12 was performing professionally across a wide repertoire of musical styles, including folk, blues, jazz, rock and cabaret. After graduating from the Adelaide University with a Bachelor of English (Hons) degree she took up singing full-time. During the 1970s and 1980s she performed extensively, touring her one-woman cabaret *A Star is Torn* (1979-1983) around Australia with a season in London. Other performances included *Tonight Lola Blau* (1980) and *The Pack of Women* (1981). Through these performances Archer became known as “one of the world’s foremost exponents of German cabaret songs” (Archer, 2010: n.p.), especially those of Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler and Kurt Weill. Her involvement with directing arts festivals began with the National Festival of Australian Theatre in 1993, 1994 and 1995, and the Adelaide Festival of Art in 1998 and 2000.



Figure 5-2 *Ten Days on the Island* 2001 event locations
(TDOTI, 2001b: [6])

In the previous chapter I argued that the idea of an international arts festival arose as a novel governmental solution to an enduring ‘Tasmanian problem’. *Ten Days on the Island* sought to transform Tasmania’s islandness into a governmental resource by raising the self-esteem of Tasmanians and engendering pride in the State’s achievements, furthering social and economic development, reducing parochialism, providing opportunities for

Tasmanian artists, underpinning Brand Tasmania values, and attracting tourists and media coverage to the State. Such were the myriad dreams out of which Tasmania's arts festival was conceived.

Analysed as a technology of governance, *Ten Days on the Island* originated as a means to make interventions into the Tasmanian problem by acting upon Tasmania and Tasmanians through the register of 'culture'. The notion of using culture as a means to 'intervene' in aspects of political and social life was becoming a potent tool of art exhibitions and museum displays across Australia (Bennett, 1995, 2004; McCarthy, 2004). In exhibitions such as those in the National Museum of Australia, cultural intervention was oriented to 'the history wars' then taking place in Australia, a series of intense academic arguments and popular debates over the 'facts' and 'morality' of the British colonisation of Australia.⁹⁸ In Tasmania, *Ten Days on the Island* was to intervene into the Tasmanian problem through works of art, performances, exhibitions, public talks and debate. Thereby, Tasmanians were to be encouraged to think about their place as an island and themselves as islanders, and to display and observe the distinctiveness of their 'island culture' and its place within the world's island cultures.

In this chapter I undertake two tasks by way of an analysis of whether and how *Ten Days on the Island* was able to live up to the governmental hopes invested in it. In the first section

⁹⁸Tasmania took centre-stage in the Australian history wars. That was not surprising considering Van Diemen's Land early colonisation (second only to Port Jackson, NSW), excellent archival records, and extensive local historical scholarship into the deeply-felt issues of convictism and frontier 'black-white' violence (Boyce, 2003). However, the island was propelled into the national spotlight as the 'battle ground' for the history wars when Keith Windschuttle (2002) published *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History Volume 1 Van Diemen's Land 1803-1847*. Picking Tasmania as the subject of the first volume of what was intended to be a series, Windschuttle set about attempting to dismantle 'politically correct' but 'factually inaccurate' accounts of Tasmanian frontier violence by historians such as Ryan and Reynolds. Windschuttle framed the factual errors he identified as driven by 1960s left-wing intellectual concerns – 'Marxist', 'feminist', 'postcolonial' – rather than detached and unemotional scholarly engagement. However, other academics hit back. Robert Manne (cited in Legge, 2003: 19) characterised Windschuttle's project as "a failed effort at historical revisionism or the first instalment of an authentic Australian historical denialism" and published an edited collection of retorts to Windschuttle's claims (Manne, 2003). Windschuttle represented frontline academic resistance to what Australian Prime Minister John Howard (cited in Legge, 2003: 19) claimed was a "black armband view" of Australia's past that, according to Howard, erroneously placed "imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination" at the centre-stage of the country's history. For Howard and other conservative commentators, the 'blood-on-the-wattle' version of the past that institutions such as the National Museum of Australia portrayed in their exhibitions made Australians feel ashamed of their nation and guilty of their past, and he instituted an inquiry (headed by John Carroll, 2003) "that faulted the museum's 'negative reading of Australian achievement'" (Legge, 2003: 19; see also Brett, 2003).

I provide a detailed first-hand description of the inaugural festival that emerged from the tangled governmental imaginaries that underpinned and constituted the impetus for a major cultural festival. This description is productively placed between tensions of being both part-ethnographic and part-participant observation. While I did not conduct an ethnographic analysis of the festival in the full sense most anthropologists would understand – as a disciplined research technique – I was inspired to approach the festival as an anthropological investigation in which I would observe and describe the constitution of collectives brought about by *Ten Days on the Island*. As such, I immersed myself in as many festival events and the spaces and journeys in-between festival places, as was possible, and approached performances with an agnostic interest in observing the reactions and responses of all concerned, including organisers, politicians, artists, and audience members. Conceiving of my approach to the festival as an ethnographic encounter also seemed in keeping with the nature of the festival itself, which encouraged Tasmanians to reflect on their subjectivities through a multiplicity of island cultures. The description of the festival I provide is also indebted to my knowledge of Tasmanian places, peoples and practices and, as such, represents a type of participant observation. That was particularly so insofar as I attended events and performances as an audience member, and therefore experienced the festival in terms of its ability to speak to, of and about Tasmanian places, peoples and practices. On this basis, the first section of the chapter is intended to give a first-hand and textured sense of the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island* festival and therefore prepares the way for an examination of how the festival attempted to achieve the governmental objectives imagined for it.

The second task is to address the key features that characterised *Ten Days on the Island* in 2001 (and subsequent festivals in 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009) as a distinctive and novel form of governance. In the second section of this chapter I investigate the central features of the festival, including it being a multi-art festival with a curator, of international scope, bringing a selection of the world's island cultures into conjunction with Tasmanian art under the umbrella theme of 'island', and ensuring the State-wide decentralised staging of events. Those became the key features by which the festival's governmental impetus, to address the Tasmanian problem, worked to transform Tasmania and Tasmanians.

Before I heard about the proposed *Ten Days on the Island*, I had decided on investigating the significance of island status for Tasmania as a research topic for a doctoral thesis.

Provisional analysis of the governmental inquiries detailed in Chapter 3 had provided insight into the place of islandness in Tasmanian political life. Initially, I could not see the links between those governmental inquiries and the newly proposed major cultural festival, but the foregrounding of islandness in the festival seemed intrinsically relevant to my research and worth pursuing. The island festival appeared to epitomise the rhetoric of the Bacon Labor Government, which was more generally wedded to an island trope of Tasmania, and therefore offered a live performance of the subject I had hit upon. It promised to be an experimental exercise, supported by most if not all the key players in Tasmania's diverse and riven communities, from the Premier down. The *MCFT/Steel Report* had recommended that there be two festivals guaranteed by a State Government subsidy of \$600,000⁹⁹ for each, and that thereafter "a review of the Festival be held to decide its future as a regular event on the calendar" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 13). However, the first festival was understood by organisers to be a 'pilot' project, and hence, the prospect of an on-going biennial series of festivals hinged substantially on the perceived 'success' of the first. I was in the enviable position of conducting research at a time when Tasmanian islandness seemed particularly plastic; as a concerted public effort was made to shift Tasmania. Driven by the Bacon Government with support from many non-governmental organisations and individuals, the exercise to re-position Tasmania was political; the festival had an international scope, used the trope of island, focused on island cultures, involved the state-wide staging of events; in short, the exercise constituted a spatial re-ordering of Tasmania. As a participant observer in this public experiment I had unique opportunities. From a scholarly point of view I was interested in how the festival entailed a topological crumpling and realigning of Tasmania: historically, politically, socially and geographically. Having grown up in Tasmania I could assess developments with some 'tacit' knowledge of its complex geographies and, having become familiar with them, I could use accounts of and in island studies to analyse the emergent attempt at transforming spatial imaginaries of Tasmania.

⁹⁹ The Bacon Government quickly doubled the amount of monetary support for the 2001 festival to around \$1.2 million.

During the 2001 festival, I kept a field diary of my experience of attending *Ten Days on the Island* events and performances. What follows is an edited 'first-hand' account, based on the diary-based compilation of thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and other primary resources, such as event programs, collected during the ten days. The path I took through the festival, and my response to what I saw and heard, is of course particular to me and not representative of any generic experience of the festival. However, I was not merely a casual observer, but guided and disciplined by the project of investigating the proposed outcomes of the festival against my and others' responses to what took place.

In the festival program,¹⁰⁰ Premier Bacon (cited in TDOTI, 2001a: preface) welcomed people to what was becoming known as 'Bacon's baby':

This is Tasmania's first international cultural festival and one celebrating a significant difference from most of the existing festivals held around the world.

Ten Days on the Island is a celebration of island cultures. Island dwellers are different from the masses of continent dwellers. We have skills, characteristics and attributes which set us apart. Islanders have a sense of identity defined by a distinct coastline, not an arbitrary line drawn on a map. Islanders also have an affinity with the sea. The history of every island on the globe is entwined with the world's maritime history.

The fusion of these unique characteristics dominates the culture of islands. The music, songs and dance; the stories, poetry and drama; the paintings, sculpture and crafts emerging from islands are reflections of distinct qualities not found on greater land masses. It is different because we are different. It is special because we are special. Tasmania is an archipelago of 334 islands with a rich culture extending back to the Dreamtime of the original inhabitants. *Ten Days on the Island* is a celebration of all the influences which make us unique. It is our celebration for the world.

Embrace and enjoy it. Celebrate what it means to be an island dweller.

¹⁰⁰ The *Ten Days on the Island* festival program brochure was widely distributed around Tasmania a number of months prior to the festival. In addition to useful information on what events would take place when, where and for how much, it provided snippets of information on performers, their art and their island of origin. As an object which circulated extensively between various settings, it 'set the scene' for *Ten Days on the Island*, texturing audience experience of events.

(1) *Ten Days on the Island* 2001, the inaugural festival

Day 1: Friday 30th March

Late in the afternoon, I drove over the River Derwent to the festival's 'welcome party and barbeque' at Risdon Cove, – the site of the first British camp in 1803. At the top of the hill above the cove a scattered crowd of people was milling around, chatting in small groups, relaxing on rugs, cushions and chairs. Some were picnicking and eating barbecued sausages. The mood was festive and anticipatory. I talked to Rodney Dillon, the Tasmanian Regional Commissioner of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, who told me the festival was a momentous event for Tasmania. The sun set and the afternoon light extended into early evening. Mount Wellington formed a stunning backdrop to an open-air stage; the scene resonated with an image from nineteenth century Tasmania, the painting *Mount Wellington and Hobart Town from Kangaroo Point*¹⁰¹ (1834) by colonial artist John Glover (Figure 5-3).



Figure 5-3 Mount Wellington and Hobart Town from Kangaroo Point (1834)
Painting: John Glover. (NGA, 2010)

Anne Gray (2010: n.p.) has noted 'two spheres' in Glover's painting: "the natural world of Kangaroo Point and Mount Wellington contrasted with the 'civilised' settlement of Hobart

¹⁰¹ Kangaroo Point is a couple of kilometres south of Risdon Cove.

Town; the uninhibited energy and ease of the Aboriginal people as opposed to the regimented activities of the soldiers”.

Back in Risdon Cove audience members began dancing to, and applauding, the music and singing of Tasmanian Aboriginal group, The Island Coes. Then Stompin Youth, a Tasmanian dance company, performed a rousing piece, described in the festival program (TDOTI, 2001a: 32) as a “brave work [that] traces traditional [Aboriginal and settler] travelling lines all over the island, acknowledging human placement upon this land and examining concepts of people inhabiting place, place shaping people, people shaping people”. The suggestion there was to reflect on the relations amongst Tasmania’s geography and Tasmanians, indigenous and settlers alike. The ‘other-island’ component of the entertainment was Te Vaka, a ten-piece outfit of ‘traditional music-makers’ and dancers from islands in the Pacific (Figure 5-4).

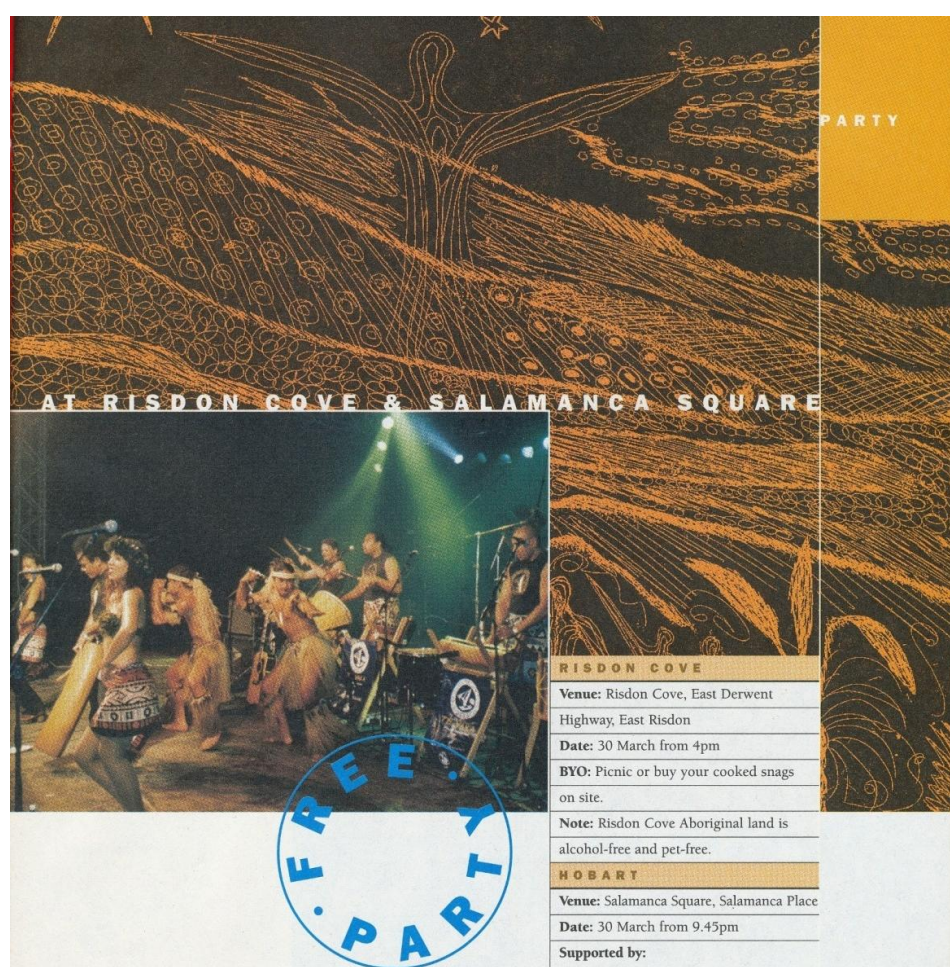


Figure 5-4 Te Vaka and the festival’s opening night free party (TDOTI, 2001a: 12)

As the Tasmanian performances intimated, the site chosen for the welcome party was significant for having been 'returned' to the control of Tasmanian Aborigines in 1996, a gesture that had special meaning given the sore history of that place. In September 1803, Risdon Cove had welcomed a different party: forty-nine Britons, including twenty-nine convicts and eight soldiers from the notorious New South Wales Corps. Under the control of a young naval Lieutenant John Bowen, this ragged crew began the official colonisation of Van Diemen's Land. The reason for their hurried deployment was "to secure all territory in the region, so that the French could be denied strategic and geographical advantage" (Warden, 1999: 189). The French, with whom Britain was at war, had visited Tasmania in the year before, so were thought to be appraised of its strategic position on the southern sea route to New South Wales. The new colony's long-term significance for the British, however, was as a penal station, a "sump of Empire" (Warden, 1999: 194). After eight months, the settlement at Risdon Cove ended tragically for the indigenous inhabitants when, on 3rd May 1804, following some initial altercations, "a few fearful, poorly disciplined and possibly drunk men guarding the small British outpost" (Boyce, 2008: 40) massacred an unknown number of Aborigines from the local Oyster Bay tribe (see Boyce, 2008: 38-41; Reynolds, 2004: 76-77; Ryan, 1996: 73-75; Tardif, 2003: 218-224). Risdon Cove was abandoned as a settlement five days after the massacre, when Bowen and his party were withdrawn by Lieutenant Governor Collins, who had settled on the opposite bank of the River Derwent at Sullivans Cove (Hobart) with a separate party in February 1804¹⁰² and had established more peaceable relations with the local Mouheneenner and Nueonne people (Boyce, 2008). And so began the official British settlement of Van Diemen's Land.¹⁰³

At 9:45pm, the festival welcome party took the same journey, moving from Risdon Cove over the River Derwent to Sullivan's Cove, to Hobart's inner city premier tourist precinct of

¹⁰² Bowen had sailed from London with over 400 people (308 convicts) with orders to settle Port Phillip (Melbourne). However, he was unimpressed with the site for the narrowness of the harbour's entrance and its lack of fresh water and easily-caught game. Increased hostilities with local Aborigines, an ill-tempered military and illness caused by five months at sea propelled him to voyage, briefly, further south to the Derwent.

¹⁰³ In October 1804 a separate settlement in the north of the island, at Port Dalrymple at the mouth of the Tamar River, was established under the control of Captain William Patterson; again largely to secure the island and Bass Strait against perceived French interest. The Reverend John West ([1852] 1981: 32) noted that the northern colony (later moved to the site of present day Launceston) "for some time held little intercourse with the settlement on the Derwent". As a concession to Tasmanian regionalism and the 'bipolar island', a separate 'opening night' party was also held in Launceston.

Salamanca Square: “Kick on after Risdon Cove to Salamanca Square” was the suggestion from the festival program (TDOTI, 2001a: preface). Te Vaka, with their infectious rhythms and ‘high-energy music’, were soon entertaining a now much larger crowd of enthusiastic onlookers, while a group of outdoor performers, Strange Fruit, swayed in the night, suspended on four-metre high poles, completely fulfilling their promise in the festival program (TDOTI, 2001a: preface), to “defy gravity and leave you spellbound”.

Day 2: Saturday 31st March

Salamanca Market, always bustling on Saturdays, was bursting with energy today. The theatre troupe Strange Fruit could again be spotted performing its choreographed acrobatics high amongst the tree tops. On the lawns, members of Te Vaka were hosting ‘South Seas’ drumming and dancing workshops for locals. I wandered around some art galleries and visited two favourite bookshops (noting that their Tasmanian literature and history sections had been re-positioned to grab the eye), and joined some friends in the Square. Opposite us, a block of expensive apartments was hung all over with gaudy towels – ‘more like Copacabana than sedate Hobart’, commented one well-travelled local. Another of the people I was sitting with explained that it was an art installation. Tasmanian artist John Vella had persuaded Maltese relatives from around the world to send him their towels, and then he had convinced the owners of the apartments to drape the eighty-eight towels over their balconies. Art writer Jane Rankin-Reid (cited in Vella, 2001: [5]) explained *TerraTowel* as

an intimate tale of the Vella’s international migrations. The artist felt that through the collection of his relatives’ private objects installed in his adopted Tasmania, a momentary antidote to the anguish of life long separation from loved ones is created.

Terra hopes to dry their tears.

By 1:30pm another equally passionate ‘installation’ was underway nearby, on Parliament House Lawns, where people were assembling to protest against the State Government’s forestry policies and practices. Although not billed as a festival event, it had clearly been

timed to coincide, so qualified as a particularly well-patronised 'fringe' event. I went over and was handed a flyer by an organiser from The Wilderness Society¹⁰⁴ (2001: [2]):

31 March is the start of the '10 Days on the Island' Festival. There will be national and international attention on Tasmania. Premier Bacon and his Deputy, Paul Lennon, will be parading themselves as clean, green and progressive. This is a chance to expose their hypocrisy and show them that our island is too special to give away to big business.

I wanted to hear what speakers might say about Tasmania's arts festival so joined the sizeable crowd of protestors, wielding placards that included some notably creative efforts: 'More SUSS than sustainable'; and 'If you fry our forests, we'll fry you Bacon'. Others were more straight-forward: 'Southwood.¹⁰⁵ We don't want it' (Figure 5-5).



Figure 5-5 Environmental protestors in front of Parliament House
Photo: Andrew Harwood (2001)

¹⁰⁴ The Tasmanian Wilderness Society was formed in 1976 by environmental activists radicalised by a hydro-electric dam which flooded Lake Pedder in Tasmania's south-west. Determined to save the Franklin River from a similar fate, by 1980 the non-government organisation was Australia wide, becoming The Wilderness Society (TWS). Through the 1990s TWS grew to be one of the largest and most prominent environmental protest groups in Australia with an extensive membership of around 50,000 in 2007 (Tranter, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ The proposed 'Southwood' was a public-private sector initiative that comprised an integrated timber processing plant based south of Hobart. Its most controversial element was the facility to burn wood 'wastes' (such as bark, limbs and branches usually left on site after logging) to generate electricity.

A number of people spoke, including conservation ecologist Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, poet Sarah Day, and writer Margaret Scott (the last two had just been participating in the festival), and then the crowd of several thousand protesters set-off down the street. I walked with them for a while, but had my work to do, so peeled-off and headed down to Hunter Street and the Plimsoll Gallery at the University of Tasmania's Centre for the Arts, where *Between Phenomena – the Panorama and Tasmania* was showing. This exhibition, scheduled to tour as far afield as Queenstown, Cradle Mountain and various unspecified 'regional venues', juxtaposed contemporary and historical Tasmanian landscapes in various media – paintings, photographs, sketches, videos and sculptures. According to the festival program (TDOTI, 2001a: 35), the assemblage revealed "the characteristics of Tasmania itself", "showing an island that is circumscribed, interconnected and decidedly panoramic in its form". In other words it pictured Tasmanian islandness. One contributor to the exhibition brochure noted that the art works "help form the basis for reimagining Tasmania" (Hutch, cited in University of Tasmania, 2001: 8).

That evening I walked to the long-established Bett Gallery in North Hobart to attend the opening of a *Poets and Painters* exhibition. From a distance the festival devotees, beer and wine in hand, could be seen spilling out onto Elizabeth Street. Inside the small gallery people jostled politely for space to examine the paintings and listen to the poetry. Not long after I arrived Aboriginal Tasmanian Jim Everett, playwright, political activist, poet and Cultural Facilitator for *Ten Days on the Island*, read a poem and the atmosphere in the stuffy space filled with sadness as people reflected on the violence of colonial Tasmania. The mood was suddenly cut off by Archer, the festival's Artistic Director, who burst into loud and seemingly unscheduled yodelling. What was meant by that 'intervention'? Did the Festival Director envisage another island? The festival program's (TDOTI, 2001a: 40) description of the exhibition hinted at such tensions: "New arrivals to the State have the task of adapting themselves to a unique island environment and society". The bemused crowd retreated onto the street and outside I met a colleague from the university, Pete Hay and an island studies academic from Prince Edward Island, Harry Baglole,¹⁰⁶ visiting

¹⁰⁶ Just prior to the festival, the Premier (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001b: n.p.) had highlighted the visit of Baglole: "Mr Speaker, if I could just give one anecdote, the head of Island Studies at the Prince Edward Island University, a province of Canada, sent his congratulations to Tasmania for stealing the march on the rest of the

especially for the festival. They appeared to be taking advice from the festival program (TDOTI, 2001a: 40), which suggested that the Bett Gallery was “the start of a glorious stroll from gallery to gallery ... the arty version of a pub-crawl”.

Day 3: Sunday 1st April

Accompanied by a local Tasmanian artist, Kim Kerze, I drove east from Hobart towards the Tasman Peninsula, with Kim reading aloud the *The Sunday Tasmania's* glowing articles about the festival. Journalist Michelle Paine (2001: 5) had been “swept up in a joyful spectacle”, experiencing the first day of the festival as an ‘exotic’ “dream [that] has become a glorious technicolour reality”. The headline on the front page was “Tassie hits a perfect 10”:

Once Tasmanians would flock to the footy [Australian Rules football] on a Saturday ... yesterday thousands were watching aerial antics of a far different kind. Swaying sky-high above Salamanca Market patrons, the high fliers of theatre troupe Strange Fruit were a spectacular hit as *10 Days on the Island*, Tassie's biggest cultural festival in a century, took flight (Paine, 2001: 1).

Colour photographs of smiling performers demonstrated Hobart's florid transformation. One exhibited a dancer from Te Vaka, in grass-skirt and coconut-brassiere, arms held high to the sky, stranded in an ocean of onlookers. The paper juxtaposed its enthusiastic coverage of the festival with reportage of the environmental protest on Parliament House Lawns, which Sean Stevenson (2001: 3) described as Tasmania's “largest anti-logging rally in at least a decade”. In another article, journalist Simon Bevilacqua (2001: 4) put the celebration and protest together:

Tasmania's arts community has focused the international spotlight on the ‘tragedy’ of clear-felling of the state's native forests. In a bold initiative during Tasmania's premier arts festival, *10 Days on the Island*, the state's leading artists signed an open letter to Premier Jim Bacon slamming forestry practices as out of the ‘dark ages’.

world by holding such an event as *Ten Days*, and I am told that after having his meagre supply of programs snapped up by fellow enthusiasts on Prince Edward Island he has decided he must see it for himself and I am told he is now on his way to Tasmania”.

Kim and I were heading towards *Sculpture by the Sea*, an exhibition of 64 sculptures, by 68 artists and including 45 Tasmanians, carefully located in three different sites on the Tasman Peninsula east of Hobart (Figure 5-6).



Figure 5-6 Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula 1:250,000
Map: Tasmanian Government (2000)

The first site we visited was the narrow strip of land at Eaglehawk Neck. In the nineteenth century, a line of armed soldiers and chained dogs had been stationed across the isthmus to prevent the escape of convicts from the penal station of Port Arthur, thereby turning Tasman Peninsula into a virtual prison island. During October and November 1830 the Peninsula's geography had served a different, though related, insular function. Van Diemen's Land Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, under pressure from colonists to address what they perceived as "the wanton and barbarous murders committed by the natives indiscriminately" (cited in Boyce, 2008: 273), instigated a full-scale military

operation against the Big River and Oyster Bay tribes. The 'Black Line', as it was known, consisted of over two thousand men (500 troops, 700 convicts, and the rest free settlers) arranged in a human line that advanced through south-east Tasmania "in a pincer movement" (Ryan, 1996: 110) designed to drive Tasmanian Aborigines ahead of them and so corral them into the Tasman Peninsula (Figure 5-7).

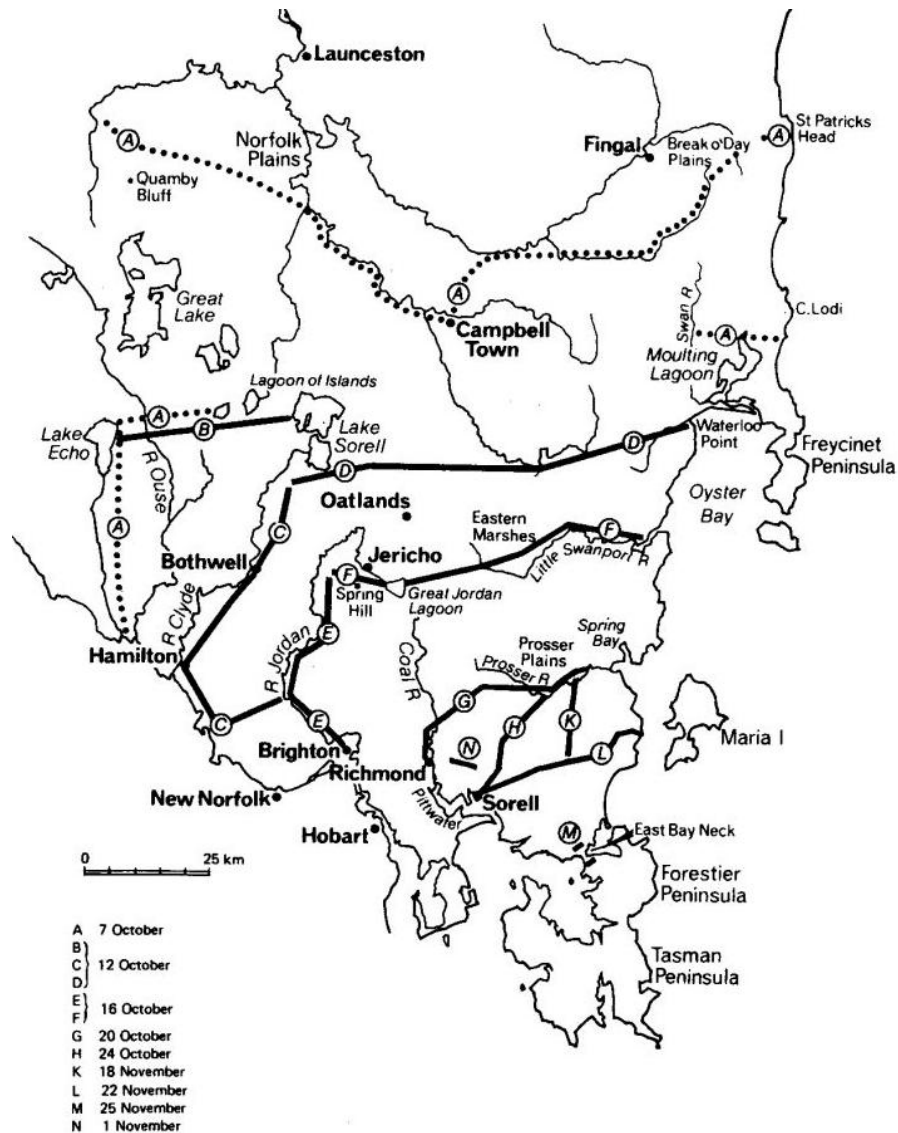


Figure 5-7 The Black Line: 'Military operations, October-November 1830.' (Ryan, 1996: 111)

At the Officers Quarters at Eaglehawk Neck we bought a catalogue. As well as providing maps of where the art works were located, the publication had enthusiastic messages from organisers who proposed that an important relationship existed between art, environment

and heritage in Tasmania. Premier Bacon (cited in Handley, 2001: 3) configured the sea as “a subject close to the hearts of island residents”:

to have this event at Roaring Beach and Eaglehawk Neck, two examples of Tasmania’s stunning environment, creates a synergy of visual delights for the viewer. I encourage you to [explore] further ... at the other Festival events around the island, many of which ... also [have] the spectacular backdrop of Tasmania’s natural environment.

A representative of the events principal sponsor (JBWere, a financial investment advisory company) commended the “appropriately dramatic setting” (Paynter, cited in Handley, 2001: 4) of the works of art. Artistic Director Archer (cited in Handley, 2001: 6) welcomed the inclusion of a sculpture trail in the festival program: it “combines art and landscape in the most creative and imaginative way. And, of course, that is what *Ten Days on the Island* is all about”. Stephen Large (cited in Handley, 2001: 8) – CEO of the Port Arthur Historic Site – saw the sculptures as a “creative response ... to a place of profound paradox”. Belying the scenery’s apparent beauty and peace, “Gothic horror still lies close beneath the skin. No wonder these sculptors have responded in such varied, emotional and inspired ways to this place” (Large, cited in Handley, 2001: 8). One of the sculptures of Eaglehawk Neck bore the chilling title, *Dog Running*. It consisted of red and white ochre stones that formed a line across the isthmus where the chain of dogs once snarled.

We drove on to Port Arthur, site of the colony’s notorious high security prison, and now Tasmania’s most visited major tourist site, arriving in time to hear sonorous harp music (*Towards the Stream in the Wood*), played by Marshall McGuire, filtering and reverberating amongst the convict-hewn sandstone ruins. We were disappointed to have just missed a piano recital, Gabriella Smart’s *Quiet This Metal*, which had been “inspired by the plight of those who have been incarcerated or isolated from the world” (TDOTI, 2001a: 39).

Described as a work which “explores that place within us that reaches out from the dark after tragedy” (TDOTI, 2001a: 39), the recital spoke directly to Tasmanian experiences of this place of misery, historically both distant and proximate. Having ceased operating as a penal station in 1887, Port Arthur was again subject to violence when on Sunday 28th April 1996 a 29 year old Tasmanian man used multiple automatic weapons to kill 35 people, many of them tourists (Beirman, 2003). Some commentators on the Port Arthur massacre

thought it indicative of something deeper in Tasmanian society, hinting that the massacre might not be solely attributable to the actions of a psychologically-disturbed individual. For example, Christopher Sheil (1997: 260) thought the “recent explosions of violence in Tasmania are emblems of an island community that can feel the future foreclosing”. For Hay (1996a: 71, 74) Port Arthur was “a place where meanings collide”, the site was a “tangible icon through which Tasmanians might finally confront the legacy of the past and attain a responsible adulthood”. Certainly a range of conjunctions of contemporary art and Tasmanian history were evident at Port Arthur: Strange Fruit were again in performance, the penitentiary serving as an incongruous backdrop for their rhythmic swaying as a sea breeze ruffled their colourful costumes (Figure 5-8).



Figure 5-8 Audience watching Strange Fruit at Port Arthur
Photo: Andrew Harwood (2001)

Leaving the prison, we drove to Roaring Beach, further around the peninsula. It was mid-afternoon and at the turn-off to ‘Windgrove’, the cliff-top property that was the setting for most of the sculptures, we encountered a slow-moving procession of cars advancing along the rutted and narrow dirt access road. Lucy Bleach’s (cited in Handley, 2001: 14) haiku-like statement for her work, *Slippery When Wet*, positioned half-way along the track, seemed to have anticipated the crowds: ‘Kids in the back seat of the car, restless captives of the journey. Relentless questions, running commentaries’.

Here at Windgrove the sculpture trail was a well-trodden path that zigzagged its way through copses of drooping she-oaks and dry-grassland tussocks along the edge of the cliff. Below, the sea churned and smashed as a southerly swell rolled in from Storm Bay. Gulls were squawking and sailing on the wing, and a sea eagle was soaring over the ocean. A number of visitors, clad in dark wetsuits and carrying surfboards, had decided to combine art with exercise. Clearly, sculpture, at Windgrove, included the dramatic landscape we were being invited into. It became apparent that much thought had gone into the placement of the works. While some had been made elsewhere, they were strategically placed into the setting. Others were 'site-specific' (Kwon, 2004): worked up in response to the environment. The geometrical grid of John and Penny Smith's *Viewfinder*, for example, provided sightlines for Wedge Island in the distance while also pointing backwards to the viewer, and seemed deliberately to evoke tensions of artistic intervention, between the universalising abstraction of island form and the specific materiality of actual islands (Figure 5-9).



Figure 5-9 Wedge Island viewed through *Viewfinder* by John and Penny Smith
Photo: Andrew Harwood (2001)

Completing the walk we returned to the car and after slowly dodging past the steady stream of incoming traffic reached the highway and headed back to Hobart. The reflective silence in which we travelled marked a day when we had sought out sculptures that, in turn, had persistently obliged us to look at the island environment and reflect on Tasmania's colonial past. *The Mercury* the next day recounted the event as intervening like a bright contrast in one of Tasmania's darkest histories: "visitors and locals should long remember the day Tasmania's brilliant cultural festival came to Port Arthur" (Briggs, 2001: 20). National arts writer Kevin Murray (2001: 4) went one step further. Writing under the heading 'Archer takes the Devil out of Tasmania', Murray thought that not only had "Robyn Archer's *10 Days on the Island* [succeeded] in exorcising the stigma of Port Arthur [it had also succeeded in] ... reversing the [island's] sad tale of economic decline".

The day wasn't over for me. The Premier was about to announce the winner of the inaugural Tasmanian Pacific Region Prize "for the best novel written by a resident or citizen of Australia, New Zealand or Melanesia" (Arts Tasmania, 2001: [1]). A selection committee had whittled the 120 submissions to a shortlist of six novels from which the winner would be decided. To warm applause, the Chair of the Committee, academic Associate Professor Henry Reynolds, introduced the Premier:

There are, of course, other Premier's Prizes, some of which I feel the Premiers don't know much about or probably care all that much ... they see the arts as something useful for photo opportunities. But in this case I think that it is absolutely appropriate and right and fair that it is called the Premier's prize, and ... and above all Jim Bacon's prize (Rec004).¹⁰⁷

Premier Bacon used the opportunity to talk about island cultures:

It really is a very exciting time to be in Tasmania ... The whole idea of *Ten Days on the Island* and the Tasmanian Pacific Region Prize is to celebrate island cultures. Things that islands have, are unique to them, features, characteristics of their communities, their relationship with the land and sea, all of these things are part of what we are celebrating ... I hope ... for many years to come (Rec004).

¹⁰⁷ These numbers refer to research material, including recordings (Rec), interviews (Int) and notes (Not) collected during the 2001 and 2003 Festivals. See Table 6.1 in Chapter 6 (p. 256-258) for fuller description.

Bacon used his speech to make four announcements: the name of the prize winner; the future expansion of the biennial prize (given sponsor support); another *Ten Days on the Island* for 2003; and the retention of Archer as Artistic Director. Coming on the third day of the ten day festival, the affirmation that there would be another *Ten Days on the Island* in two years time suggested that the inaugural festival was already a success. Awarding the prize to Elizabeth Knox, a New Zealander, for *The Vintner's Luck* (2000), Bacon (Rec 004) reiterated his belief that island literature “really expresses the soul of our community, as well as our minds”.

I had arranged to meet some friends at 8:00pm in Salamanca Square to watch *Tartan Shorts and Tassie Tales*, a collection of short films that was touring the island. The selection, from Tasmania, Scotland and the Shetland Islands, pointed to the significance of everyday cultural material practices – messing about with cars, boats, computers, ferrets, and lawn bowls – in the maintenance of inter-generational ‘island identities’. Another theme was the obvious enjoyment the various filmmakers, some first-timers, had derived from producing stories that engaged them with peoples, materials and practices. In one local production, *Searching for the Brown Boys*, five young Tasmanian Aborigines journeyed to Cape Barren Island in Bass Strait (part of the Furneaux group of islands) to discover the island’s unique indigenous musical style. In the early twentieth century The Brown Boys, a group of Aboriginal Tasmanians, had taught themselves to play guitars, mandolins, mouth organs and violins, producing music that was an idiosyncratic combination of bluegrass and country. That musical tradition had been re-interpreted later in the twentieth century by another group of Aboriginal Tasmanians, The Island Coes. With the music documenting a complex mix of cultural inflections, the film underscored the importance of the Furneaux group of islands to Tasmania’s Aboriginal survival. The search for the origins of a style of music became a personal and collective retrieval of the boys’ ancestral cultural heritage.

Day 4: Monday 2nd April

At the State Library of Tasmania in Hobart there was an exhibition of *Island Postcards*, co-ordinated and curated by Penny Carey-Wells and senior librarian Tony Marshall. More than 130 artists from 15 countries had sent ‘postcards’ to Tasmania in response to the curators’ letter asking, “what life on an island meant to them, what they thought of notions

of insularity and isolation” (Carey-Wells and Marshall, 2001: [1]). The stuffs of which the postcards were made, not just cardboard but “wild and unlikely materials such as leather, clay, metal, digital prints, plastic and shampoo” (Carey-Wells and Marshall, 2001: [1]), gave physical substance to the words and images of ‘islandness’ from the Galapagos, Manhattan, Santorini, Bruny, the Cook and Cape Barren islands, and others. They were displayed in combination with the library’s own extensive collection of Tasmanian postcards dating from the 1890s onwards. The juxtaposition of exotic images and uncanny materials from elsewhere with more familiar scenes performed a microcosm of the festival itself, a type of “motionless voyage” in place (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 177) where the viewer could vicariously experience “accessible and colourful slices of [islander] life” (Carey-Wells and Marshall, 2001: [1]).

That evening Hobart’s Theatre Royal – Australia’s oldest theatre building constructed in 1837 – was the venue for the Australian debut of Cois Céim’s *Ballads*, an Irish work based on the Great Famine of Ireland (Figure 5-10).



Figure 5-10 *Ballads*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 5)

According to the *Ballads* event brochure (Webster, cited in TDOTI, 2001d: [3]) Cois Céim was “developing a new dance theatre language” unique “in Ireland and internationally” for crossing “the conventional boundaries of dance and theatre ... to explore [a] ... new creative frontier”. Writer Charlie O’Neill (cited in TDOTI, 2001d: [7-8]) linked the performance’s politics of famines, past and present, to geography:

at the time of our famine there was an ample supply of food in the country. But while hungry people did not have the resources to buy it, those who controlled the food were

exporting it to our colonial masters across the water. Our carers were dispensing the venom while selling off the antidote. No surprise then that during the famine of 1984/1985 which killed one million people, Ethiopia was exporting green beans to England.

The other day I saw a young woman, bent and broken, walking out of a block of flats. She was barely able to move with the weight her body carried. The weight was the weight of hunger. The arthritis of poverty. She was barely there at all. She was a legal alien from Ireland's third world. A damaged dancer.

During the 1820s and 1830s Van Diemen's Land had been the preferred antipodean colony for the British free emigrant. However, during the 1840s the island experienced a major demographic shift as convicts became essentially the only new arrivals. Significantly, "between 1840 and 1853 almost 10,000 convicts arrived in Van Diemen's Land from Ireland. Moreover, most of these men and women were sentenced during the Irish famine of 1845-49, one of the most appalling human tragedies of the nineteenth century" (Boyce, 2008: 225). The lights dimmed, the mysterious sounds of uilleann pipe music and dry ice 'smoke' wafted over the stage, as Ireland's dancing bodies performed the truth of O'Neill's (cited in TDOTI, 2001d: [8]) claim: "history is movement. Sometimes the movement is pure, entralling and dynamic. Sometimes it's pained, damaged and angry".

Day 5: Tuesday 3rd April

At 6:00pm the Peacock Theatre in Salamanca Place presented four playwrights and producers from "island societies" (TDOTI, 2001a: 10): Stella Kent (Tasmania), John Breen (Ireland), Justin Lewis (New Zealand), and Helga Arnalds (Iceland) in 'Play Talk'. Daryl Peebles, the Executive Officer of *Ten Days on the Island*, introduced the discussion as an "exploration of island cultures" that would seek to uncover how the individual art of the four playwrights had been "influenced by islands" (Not003).

Kent of Launceston thought that producing work on an island – as distinct from the Australian mainland – had tended to make her "look inwards more than most" (Not003). Kent's assessment echoed the opinion of other island writers, such as Margaret Scott (1983: 49; see also Smith, 1983, 1995/96), who wrote that Tasmanian poets "have seemed

compelled to turn inwards to explore their own identities and, at the same time, to search after an understanding of their place as human beings in nature and in time". Inwardness had driven Kent to produce works that engaged with Tasmania's convict history. Thus, in Launceston in the 1890s, half the population had a convict origin, but rather than a 'Vandemonian spirit' (Castles, 1991; also see Boyce, 1996) leading to riotous living, Launceston's society was highly stratified and civic-minded and up-rightly desired to get rid of the "convict stain" and "banish the darkness" of the past. Kent also thought that "island dwellers were less sophisticated than city dwellers", and that poverty and scarcity in Tasmania had resulted in innovative ideas for recycling things – for example Marjorie Bligh (from the north-west of Tasmania) had become famous throughout Australia for making practical household items out of other people's rubbish. Kent's play, *Our Path* (which appeared in the festival), had celebrated a particular Tasmanian quality, which she defined as "innocent earnestness" (Not003).

Director Lewis agreed about the importance of telling "your culture's" stories. Themes associated with island societies, such as exile and the unfamiliarity that stemmed from being in a strange place, did not require a "heavy-handed approach" because they spoke to universal human themes (Not003). Thus, *Krishna's Dairy*, a single-actor play written and performed by Jacob Rajan, used masks to tell the story of a migrant Indian couple's struggle to make a profit from their corner milk bar in New Zealand.

Rajan used masks, Arnalds used puppets. Her one-woman show *Leif the Lucky One* told the story of the Icelanders who discovered and explored America one thousand years ago. The play had arisen from a desire to "get back to her roots", in particular her relationship to her island home (Not003). Echoing Gauguin's questions on his island-of-choice in the South Pacific (Daws, 1980), she asked, "Who am I? Where do I come from? What do I have?" Answering those questions led her to reflect that Iceland had a strong oral tradition: "my mother, grandmother and so on" were all story tellers.

Breen, the writer and director of *Alone It Stands* – an epic tale about the day Munster’s¹⁰⁸ amateur rugby team beat the all powerful New Zealand All Blacks – continued the panel’s emphasis on ‘plot-driven’ oral narrative traditions in which the ‘function of story’ drove the form. In “Ireland, a great part of our culture is about big brother, powerful neighbour, about seeing ourselves in relation to Great Britain” (Not003). If sport is a metaphor for life, the significance of the legendary 1978 12-nil defeat of the All Blacks (who didn’t lose another game all tour), lay in the complex politics of contemporary Irish life. “Harkening back to a time of innocence”, the nostalgic *Alone It Stands* represented a later, paradoxical “longing for 1970s cultural oppression”, and expressed Ireland’s difficulty in coming to terms with a “new Ireland”, flourishing and prosperous, where “we even begin to think we can win things!” The play seemed to promise a peculiar cathartic experience for all islanders oppressed by a dominant neighbour.

Peebles wrapped up the session by comparing Tasmania with the other islands of ‘Play Talk’. Tasmania was like Ireland in that it was “Australia’s ‘little brother’ and we have to break that” (Not003). For the most part “geography dictates your culture” even while a large “shift in cultural psychology needs to take place” before Tasmania’s island-based “cultural cringe” can be overcome. He thought that issues of identity were particularly important for islanders, and that stories of migration dominated island cultures.

Comparing Iceland and Tasmania, Peebles evoked what he called the “tidal effect”: “what we have in common as islanders is that we want to travel, to get out of this island, but we always come back. We can never, never leave” (Not003).

At the Playhouse Theatre Breen’s *Alone It Stands* was due to start at 8:00pm. The straightforward interiors and seating of this theatre stood in contrast to the Theatre Royal’s aesthetic richness and weighty colonial symbolism. The performance by the Yew Tree Theatre Company emphasised the way in which *Alone It Stands* was able “to bring the voices of the periphery to the world” (Breen, cited in TDOTI, 2001e: [8]). The six actors managed to overfill the stage with the contortions of their bodies as they mutated into over sixty separate characters to recreate the events of the day when Munster defeated the All

¹⁰⁸ Many Irish convicts that were sent to Van Diemen’s Land as a result of the Irish famine were from “the very poorest regions of Munster and Connaught, where more than half the total number of deaths occurred” (Boyce, 2008: 225).

Blacks (Figure 5-11). Their movements and deft way with words elicited waves of laughter and cries of delighted recognition from the audience. The theme of winning against the odds palpably resonated with the Tasmanian audience.

Ten Days on the Island and Yew Tree Theatre Company present

Smash-hit of the Edinburgh Festival!
The tiny province of Munster in Ireland and its amateur rugby team challenge the World-Champion All Blacks from New Zealand – island v island. A funny, moving and very entertaining version of the true story, with a bunch of exceptionally talented Irish actors playing 62 roles – including a dog (you should hear those Kiwi accents!).

'David can beat Goliath. Now as a nation we look at U2, The Cranberries, Roy Keane, Seamus Heaney and Frank McCourt and we can say: These are world-beaters! Oh yeah? Well Munster did it first.'
John Breen, director.

Writer/Director: John Breen

IRELAND
THEATRE

ALONE IT STANDS
The day Munster beat the All Blacks! 'Don't miss it!' Sunday Tribune

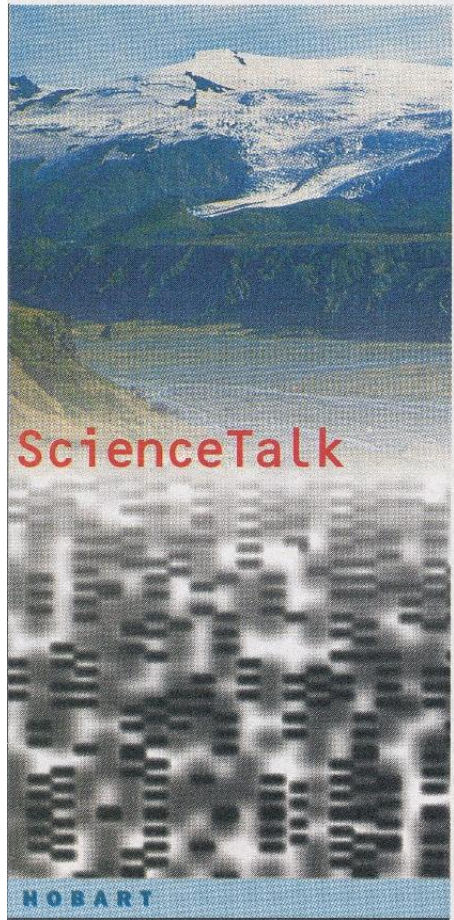
IRELAND
Located in the Atlantic Ocean, 80km west of Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland occupies the south, central and north-west regions of the island covering a total surface area of 70,828km².
Pop: 3,632,944



Figure 5-11 *Alone it Stands*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 4)

Figure 5-12 ‘Science Talk’
(TDOTI, 2001a: 28)

Islands on opposite sides of the world – what do Tasmania and Iceland have in common? Both share rare qualities which make them ideal for community-wide human genetic research projects. Professor Terry Dwyer of the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research in Hobart has spent time in Iceland and believes there are some fascinating comparisons. Hear him share his ideas in conversation with Icelandic artists as they examine the economy, art, genetics and the environment.



ScienceTalk

HOBART

Venue: Antarctic Adventure Centre
Salamanca Square,
Date: 4 April at 7pm

Day 6: Wednesday 4th April

A very different conversation about islands, one focusing on island art and science (Figure 5-12), was held at 7:00pm in the packed venue of the Antarctic Adventure Centre, in Salamanca Square. Hosted and directed by Professor Terry Dwyer, from the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research, the forum took the form of a discussion between Dwyer and two Icelandic artists.

The conversation took shape around the genetic research possibilities of ‘island laboratories’ such as Iceland and Tasmania. Dwyer observed that “islands have a certain distinctiveness about them”, and “create unique cultural features” while “the down side of islands is that their isolation tends to place them on the outer”, making them peripheral “to the main continents of the world” (Rec005). The professor thought that the isolation of islands was the reason for their economic marginalisation, but now, because of recent developments with technology, and particularly biotechnology, isolated island societies, such as Iceland, comprised economic “success stories”: indeed, Iceland was one of the two fastest growing economies in Europe.

Dwyer wanted to draw links between the success of Iceland’s genetic research and similar possibilities for Tasmania, but the two Icelandic artists kept raising problems. They explained that the collection of

Icelandic DNA had been ‘scandalous’ as it evidently was conducted without the permission of donors. The ensuing controversy resulted in resistance to the program and much debate about the merits of the scientific use of the genetic heritage of Icelanders. But Dwyer’s scientific enthusiasm was unstoppable, as he supported his case with graphs and figures, and argued for Tasmania’s advantages as an island laboratory for genetic research: its colonial history, as well as its isolation, had led to the “narrowness of the gene pool” and made it easier to “search for genes” here: “about two-thirds, 300,000 [of Tasmania’s population of 500,000] are descended from a very narrow base” – “there are some very large families in Tasmania” (Rec005). He thus presented an aspect of Tasmania’s islandness – its bounded social and family network – in the most material form. There was ‘living’ evidence of how islandness performs itself.

At 8:00pm the Malagasy guitarist and singer D’Gary performed at the Federation Concert Hall, a large bronze circular building, attached to a major hotel, and recently purpose-built for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. The starkness of the ultra-modernist interior, with its hard, cold and colourless materials and surfaces, was at odds with the Malagasy music, despite the claim in the event brochure that the music was “at once close to tradition and yet strikingly modern, pared down but perfectly sophisticated” (Lema, cited in TDOTI, 2001f: [8]). D’Gary was to perform at other sites around Tasmania, including the Launceston Tramsheds Theatre, the Ross Town Hall, and the Risby Cove Art Gallery in Strahan, whose warmer and more intimate settings would, I thought, suit the music and its message of “the arid day-to-day life of his people, the Baras – buffalo breeders in the southwest region of Madagascar” (Lema, cited in TDOTI, 2001f: [8]).

Day 7: Thursday 5th April

From the upper circle of the Theatre Royal, I had the impression of peering down into a human-sized dolls house, as Circus Oz, an ‘animal-free’ extravaganza of acrobatic thrills, tumbled and jumped, leaped and ran, in death-defying manoeuvres. The inclusion of Circus Oz (from Melbourne), with its irreverent comedy and upside-down, inside-out take on the world, metaphorically inverted the continent’s relation to Tasmania.

Day 8: Friday 6th April

At the Long Gallery in Salamanca Place was an extensive exhibition of Tasmanian craft and design, *Response to the Island*. Consistent themes identified by the curator were “the consideration of Tasmania in the present in relation to the past ... commitments to cultural reconciliation and strong expressions of the maintenance and revival of indigenous culture” (Cochrane, cited in SAC, 2001: [2]). In the Sidespace Gallery next door an exhibition, *Circumnavigating the Island*, by Tasmanian Ann Holt comprised paintings of Bruny Island south of Hobart, “a historically and ecologically significant site, unique in the context of Australian landscape” (TDOTI, 2001a: 36). Back in the Long Gallery, technicians were busy setting up equipment to record a special Tasmanian edition of the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s (ABC) iconic radio program, *The Music Show*, featuring an interview with the Tasmanian Premier. The presenter asked the Premier what he thought arts festivals were “good for, in general? I mean, what do you get from them?”

Well, I think in Tasmania we see a remarkable array of art forms ... and we have always looked at this in two ways; what we can provide the Tasmanian community and also the message that we want to send to the world, that this is a celebration of island cultures ... and ... what it means [to be an islander], what is different about being an island (Rec006).

Brilliant sun streamed through the many-paned windows of the Long Gallery’s thick sandstone walls. In the nineteenth century this part of Hobart had been a bustling scene of waterfront warehouses; more recently the buildings had provided studios for artists; and now were being taken over by restaurants for tourists: a familiar story of urban renewal and gentrification. Two storeys up and overlooking Salamanca Place the windows looked out onto European sycamore’s (plane trees) that were beginning to glow with autumnal tints. Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra double bassist Michael Fortescue and experimental guitarist Greg Kingston were deep in improvisation, producing weird and wonderful sounds on their instruments. Kingston had a messily upturned container of objects in front of him, into which he would randomly dive his hand and emerge with ... a plastic frog ... which he’d press and squash, tease and bash over the strings of the guitar. Fortescue,

between plucked notes, cried out loudly, “An island is a mass of land”, which, after an uncomfortably long pause, he followed with “surrounded by air!”

During the festival, a Hobart-city lounge bar, Temple Place, had been home to ‘Meet the Composers’. Today, following a “week of performances, interviews and discussion” (TDOTI, 2001a: 24), Charlie Chan and Annie Greig, respectively composer and artistic director of local dance company TasDance, had come here to talk about their latest production, *Treasured Island*. Chan described a “sound-making trip” that took him to the east coast of Tasmania in a search for a “sense of place” and to collect the sounds of waterfalls, dirt and the sea (Not005). His score for *Treasured Island* combined and harmonised those precise “water and land elements” to create the sound scenery for a dance that was located musically and emotionally in place.

Day 9: Saturday 7th April

Travelling the 200 kilometres from Hobart to Launceston in the north of the island, I briefly caught sight of Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Julie Gough’s art installation, *Stand*, in the dry and treeless expanse of the Midlands Highway. “A tea-tree enclosure overlooks the highway. Glowing from within, it casts shadowy reminders across time of this island’s occupation” (TDOTI, 2001a: 36): but this evocative work did not glow in the flash of passing. That afternoon in Launceston, Théâtre Talipot, from Réunion Island, in the centre of the Indian Ocean, was presenting *The Water Carriers* (Figure 5-13).

Ten Days on the Island, in association with Tjibaou Cultural Centre, New Caledonia presents Theatre Talipot

A magical blend of world music and magnificent dance forms, the audience is transported to a land burnt dry – winner of first prizes in Edinburgh, Spoleto and Kontakt. These men are extraordinary physical actors. One minute they're a family of monkeys, the next a tribe of warriors or a group of women, singing and gossiping in the marketplace.

The scene where the rains finally come and the men are briefly seen rowing across a lake against a full moon is breathtaking.
Christopher Bowen, *The Scotsman*

Writer/Artistic Director:
Philippe Pelen Baldini
Painter: Modali
Choreographer: Savitry Nair

REUNION ISLAND PHYSICAL THEATRE

'Physical theatre is seldom so profoundly affecting.' Christopher Bowen *The Scotsman*

THE WATER CARRIERS

REUNION is an island in the Indian Ocean covering 2,510km². The terrain is mostly rugged and mountainous, with fertile lowlands along the coast. Pop: 717,723

Supported by:

LAUNCESTON

Venue: Princess Theatre, 57 Brisbane Street
Dates: 5-6 April at 8pm, 7 April at 2pm & 8pm
Duration: 85 minutes (no interval)
Tickets: \$40, Concession \$28
Bookings: Ticketmaster 7: 136 166, Princess Theatre: 03) 6323 3666

DEPARTMENT OF REUNION

AUSTRALIAN DEBUT

7

Figure 5-13 *The Water Carriers*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 7)

On a stage adorned simply with “a dried up tree and a bowl full of dried clay” the four dancers used music, song, a few words, and their highly-charged dancing to tell what happens when “the river bed has become a dried gorge, the spring has dried up, and the humid and fertile valley – a vast desert” (Moucazambo, cited in TDOTI, 2001g: [7]). Art critic Geoffrey Milne (2001: 42) described the story:

The Water Carriers is as simple as theatre gets in form, but the series of narratives – of a river dammed for progress, a wedding that can't proceed without water to cook the

rice, a lake that could be a mirage that swallows up four brothers before a fifth has the sense to appease a presiding bird figure – is as complex as any orthodox spoken-word drama could be.

Across the North Esk River, was Launceston's Inveresk Railyards. Previously a railway hub and industrial workshop, the site had been recently reclaimed by Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery as the new cultural centre for contemporary art in the 'northern capital'. In the Blacksmith Shop there, composer David Young was performing *Overheard at Inveresk*, a commissioned piece featuring a sound installation punctuated by an 'Ovid-inspired' "miniature opera in ten parts for electronics, soprano and percussion (ossia boy soprano, brass band, homing pigeons and chorus of voices and bicycles)" (TDOTI, 2001h: [3]). The dusty machinery workshop, filled with tools that appeared as if they had only just been set down for a 'smoko', resonated again with the "clamour of machines and the stories of its occupants. The giant steam hammers, furnaces, associated manual tools, timesheets and graffiti, evoke one hundred years of working life" (TDOTI, 2001a: 25).

A three hours' drive from Launceston took me to near Triabunna on the east coast of Tasmania where *Sea Chant: Sealers, Ships and Saw Horses* (Figure 5-14) was to be performed on a sheep-grazing property abutting the edge of Grindstone Bay. The car bumped across paddocks of grassland and over a number of stock grids. Organised by the East Coast Regional Development Organisation (ECRDO) in conjunction with Hobart-based experimental theatre company IHOS Opera, *Sea Chant* was a giant-sized community opera that took, as its stage setting, the landscape of the original colonial farmhouse and variously-dated outbuildings. As a prelude to the main performance, the sound of singing came from the shearing shed; along with earthy scents of sheep and wool. In the middle of an open paddock, in an area defined by fencing-wire and hay bales, audience members were seating themselves randomly in plastic chairs under a brilliant Easter moon.

East Coast Regional Development Organisation in association with IHOS Opera and Ten Days on the Island presents

A truly local community project, *Sea Chant – Settlers, Ships and Saw-Horses*, encompasses the history of the East Coast from 1901 to 2001, and looks beyond the edge. The East Coast region is rich in painters, writers, musicians, singers, poets, actors and crafts people, all of whom will come together with members of IHOS opera. Director, Constantine Koukias, has written successful and popular operas such as *Pulp – An Industrial Opera* about the history of Burnie's pulp mill; and the critically acclaimed *Days and Nights with Christ* and *To Traverse Water*.

Bass: Gary Rowley
 Mezzo Soprano: Marilyn Smith
 Keyboards: Michael Kieran-Harvey, Arabella Tenniswood
 Visual Director: Lorraine Biggs

A COMMUNITY OPERA BY CONSTANTINE KOUKIAS AND IHOS OPERA

SEA CHANT

Settlers, Ships and Saw-Horses

IHOS...powerful visual performances...strikingly original images...unlike anything you've ever seen before

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 Australia Council
 for the Arts

Tasmania
 ARTS TASMANIA

Centenary of Federation
 Tasmania

Glamorgan Spring Bay Council

TRIABUNNA

Venue: Triabunna district, for event and program details see newspapers at time of *Ten Days on the Island*.

Dates: 6-8 April at 7.30pm

Duration: 120 minutes (interval)

Tickets: \$20

Bookings: Ticketmaster7: 136 166

NEW
 WORK

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Figure 5-14 *Sea Chant*
 (TDOTI, 2001a: 27)

Sea Chant was described as “a truly local community project” encompassing “the history of the East Coast” (TDOTI, 2001a: 27), and both ambitions were reflected in the sheer number of performers and the many ‘eras’ that made up the history of the region. Act One was briskly performed by local school children and women, some known ‘identities’ and professional singers, who acted the roles and sang the stories of European¹⁰⁹ settlement:

¹⁰⁹ Visual Director Lorraine Biggs (cited in IHOS and ECRDO, 2001: 3) provided an extensive explanation for a lack of Aboriginal history. “The visual image that I kept returning to was one that appeared to be set on the shores of Grindstone Bay ... The image was from an old atlas of the Baudin Expedition ... With no other pre-conceived ideas we contacted a number of Aboriginal people involved in the arts to discuss our need to make

whaling, police, sheep, woodcutting and local government. Their voices rang out across the paddocks. The coming of Australian Federation in 1901 marked the end of Act One. We rose from our chairs and passed under a 'Federation Arch' and alongside a fully-laden log truck, with the word 'HOPE' emblazoned in fire across its side (Figure 5-15), to the makeshift second stage.



Figure 5-15 Log truck ablaze with 'HOPE' during *Sea Chant*
Photo: Lucia Rossi (2001)

After Act One's rapid pace and expansive setting, Act Two was longer and more detailed, the constrained architecture of the stage and tightly-packed rows of seats heightening the 'thickness' of the close and extended community relations it performed. It touched on many themes, soft and hard – beachside picnics, two world wars, peace and prosperity, fish processing, employment, surfing – and finished to rapturous applause with the full cast on stage and singing 'The East Coast Anthem'. As *The Mercury's* theatre critic Wal

an appropriate acknowledgement of Aboriginal people and how we should go about it. The consensus was that with the majority of the production focussed on colonial history we could not do any justice to any of the key issues regarding Palawa people. The use of the image from the Baudin expedition without any other content seemed, inappropriately, to give a Eurocentric view of a peaceful existence which we know has been far from the truth. With due respect we took advice to concentrate on the more recent colonial history".

Eastman (2001: 8) drily reported, “the overwhelming community spirit was palpable and triumphed over hiccups”.

Day 10: Sunday 8th April

On the final morning of the festival, organisers, artists, reporters and audience members met at Machine Cafe in Salamanca Square to engage in an informal discussion of “how *Ten Days on the Island* has widened our view” of island cultures (TDOTI, 2001a: 28). Archer and Bacon drank coffees in the autumnal sunshine as they fielded questions and directed the discussion (Figure 5-16).



Figure 5-16 Robyn Archer and Jim Bacon (left) and audience for Island Talk (right)
Photos: Laurindo Garcia (2001)

Premier Bacon again displayed his interest in the literature of Newfoundland:

People really ought to read Wayne Johnston’s *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* [2000b] which is the story of the first Premier of Newfoundland. That is a story about a community that really tears itself apart ... about which way to go over the referendum to join the Canadian Federation or not ... And it is quite true that we do have ups and downs. But so do other places ... We need to concentrate on what are the unique good things that we have. And we have what people are looking for. And yeah, you know it is not [going to be] perfect overnight, but gee, it’s getting better.

When I approached the Premier for an interview about the festival at the end of the session, he was enthusiastic, but suggested I should “read Wayne Johnston’s books and then get back to me”.¹¹⁰

One of the final festival events was ‘Law and Islands’, part of a series of Writer’s Readings hosted by a local Hobart bookshop. The venue was packed. The host of the forum introduced the first speaker by suggesting “isn’t it fitting that on the last day of our ten day sentence we should talk about criminals!”

Peter Pierce, Professor of Australian Literature at James Cook University and “descended from the first commandant of Port Arthur” (Pierce, 1997: n.p.), reversed the causality commonly associated with islands when he declared that he was less interested in the effects of Tasmania on the law than he was of the effects of the law on Tasmania. Tasmania was a prison island off a prison island, and it contained multiple prison islands within it, the entire “place was founded as a penological experiment” (Rec008). The effects of laws that regulated the experiment were manifest materially in the island, convict-built remains testifying to the past in the present, and serving as places of “pilgrimage and proper remembrance”. Noting that he had never “had much truck with the notion of a ‘convict stain’ or ‘wound’ or ‘shadow’”, Pierce nevertheless had “been struck while preparing this [talk] with the realisation that Tasmania is a recidivist, it is a culprit, it is doomed. Every Tasmanian joke makes it continually reconvicted for its guilty past” (Rec008).

Nicola Goc, academic and author, had recently travelled through “the heart-land [Central Highlands] of Tasmania” and was struck by how the landscape reverberated with the nomenclature of bushranging (Rec008). Bushranging was an Australian-wide colonial phenomenon which saw small groups of men, initially convict absconders and then, beginning with the gold rush of the 1850s, ‘outlaws’, sought to survive in the isolated and sparsely populated Australian bush. Raiding the property of others, bushrangers were an evocative presence in colonial society for close to 100 years. The most famous Australian bushranger, whose death by hanging in 1880 signalled the end of the bushranger (Tranter, 2008), was Ned Kelly,

¹¹⁰ After I read both books by Wayne Johnston (2000a, 2000b) that the Premier had directed Tasmanians to, I again contacted him and he responded to questions by letter.

who in folk terms has come to enshrine the heroic image of his genre. He was young, of Irish descent and so expected to rebel against English-inspired law; he reserved his destructive instincts and capacities for those in authority and took on the police; he robbed the undeserving rich and, granted the opportunity, would have given to the poor; and if he hadn't been so busy righting these wrongs he would have had more time to show himself the good bloke he really was; and so on (Murphy, 1982: 56).

Goc had her sights set on picking apart the reasons for the romanticisation and idealisation of the Australian myth of the “noble bushranger” by examining Van Diemonian ‘banditti’ (Morgan, 1998, 1999). Despite the fact that Van Diemen’s Land’s Michael Howe, Rocky Whelan, Mathew Brady, and Martin Cash were “brutal murderers” and “monsters”, leading their respective gangs to conduct numerous ghastly deeds and terrorise citizens of their day, the “Australian psyche” has empathised with their plight (Rec008). Goc attributed this mythologising to a community-wide desire to see the oppressed and marginalised triumph over the injustice of Australia’s colonial penal system.

The last to speak was Justice Pierre Slicer, a local Supreme Court judge who partially reversed Pierce’s causality, detailing numerous instances where the island’s smallness, isolation and insular colonial history had impacted upon Tasmania’s legislature and legal practice, its style of politics and government. And so the incarceration of the Tasmanian community was aired from yet another perspective.

That discussion completed my experience of Tasmania’s inaugural international arts festival. While I had attended a broad-range of performances and exhibitions in diverse locations around the island, there were many more that I had not seen. I regretted not visiting Stanley, a tiny seaside town on the far north-west coast, to see its *Island Art Prize* exhibition. I was told that Stella Kent’s community theatre *Our Path* (Figure 5-17) had utilised Launceston’s unique Cataract Gorge as a massive open-air stage, to stunning effect.

Theatre North presents a play by Stella Kent, directed by Angela Chaplin.
Our Path is a large-scale community theatre event which celebrates the Federation of Australia and Launceston's unique connection to the Gorge.

Set against the 1890s debate about Federation, the play examines the hopes and aspirations of the people of the time. The audience will move to four locations within the Gorge grounds. The formal 'play' will sit within a larger context that will involve several other events, one of which will use the talents of lighting designer Philip Lethlean to show the turning on of electricity in Launceston.

The key characters will be played by professional actors and will be supported by students and graduates from the School of Visual and Performing Arts. Community group members will provide the excitement and drama of recreating an 1890s fair. Great fun for the whole family – pack a picnic and enjoy the spectacle.

OUR PATH

Photo group at Cataract Gorge, Launceston c.1900. Photo group: P. Whistler Collection, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.

COMMUNITY THEATRE

TASMANIA
 is the southern most State and lies 2,400km south of the Australian mainland. Made up of 344 islands the total area is 68,331 sq km or 0.9% of the total area of Australia. Pop: 472,300

LAUNCESTON

Supported by:

Venue: Cataract Gorge Grounds
Dates: 29 March - 1 April at 7.30pm
Duration: 120 minutes (interval)
Tickets: \$20, Children \$15, Family (2 adults, 2 children) \$60
Bookings: Ticketmaster 7: 136 166, Princess Theatre: 03) 6323 3666

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Figure 5-17 *Our Path*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 3)

On Tasmania's east coast, at beautiful Coles Bay, Australian chef Stephanie Alexander had conducted master cooking classes ending in a feast. Dance events included traditional Japanese dancers in the *Islands of Japan*, and the choreography of world-acclaimed Tasmanian-born Graeme Murphy in TasDance's *Treasured Island* (Figure 5-18).

Tasmania's premier contemporary dance company, **TasDance**, presents a superb triple-bill by leading Australian choreographers. Graeme Murphy was born and raised in Tasmania and is the founder of Sydney Dance Company. Western Australia-based Chrissie Parrott has worked all over the world and created over 60 distinctive works for contemporary dance.



Natalie Weir is resident choreographer with the Australian Ballet and is currently working with the American Ballet Theatre and Houston Ballet.

Shakespeare Dances: Bard Bits (excerpts)
Choreography: Graeme Murphy
Music: Dankworth (sung by Cleo Laine), Strayhorn, Young

New Works
Choreography: Chrissie Parrott and Natalie Weir
Music: Charlie Chan.
Artistic Director: Annie Greig



Supported by:

LAUNCESTON	HOBART
Venue: Earl Arts Centre, 10 Earl Street	Venue: Collegiate Performing Arts Centre, 218 Macquarie Street
Dates: 30 March at 8pm, 31 March at 6pm 1 April at 8pm	Times: 5 April at 8pm, 6 April at 6pm 7 April at 8pm
Duration: 90 minutes (interval)	Duration: 90 minutes (interval)
Tickets: \$27.50, Friends & AusDance Members \$22, Concession \$17.50	Tickets: \$27.50, Friends & AusDance Members \$22, Concession \$17.50
Bookings: Ticketmaster7: 136 166 TasDance: 03) 6331 6644 Princess Theatre: 03) 6323 3666	Bookings: Ticketmaster7: 136 166 TasDance: 03) 6331 6644

Image Design: Kieran Bradley

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Figure 5-18 *Treasured Island*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 15)

The T'ang Quartet from Singapore and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra had performed in the Federation Concert Hall. Fiddlers' Bid from the Shetland Islands had delivered a "dynamic selection of music, ranging from high energy reels and jigs, to haunting airs" (TDOTI, 2001a: 19) all around Tasmania, including Latrobe, Launceston and Cambridge. Jacob Rajan delighted the critics with his performance in *Krishnan's Dairy*. During the ten days local television stations had broadcast numerous stories on the festival; one station had screened nightly one of ten three-minute documentaries made by local film-makers inspired by visiting "one of the 334 islands which comprise the State of

Tasmania” (TDOTI, 2001a: 42). Other events included a chamber opera *The Flight of Les Darcy*; the music of Oki Kano from Hokkaido; and a demonstration of indigenous weaving techniques. Australian pianist Roger Woodward had played in Launceston’s Albert Hall. A musical theatre, *Goin’ To the Island*, had travelled from Stradbroke Island in Queensland. And Icelander Helga Arnalds’ *Leif the Lucky One* had toured many small towns such as Ulverstone, Devonport, St Marys, Deloraine, Ross, and King Island in Bass Strait.

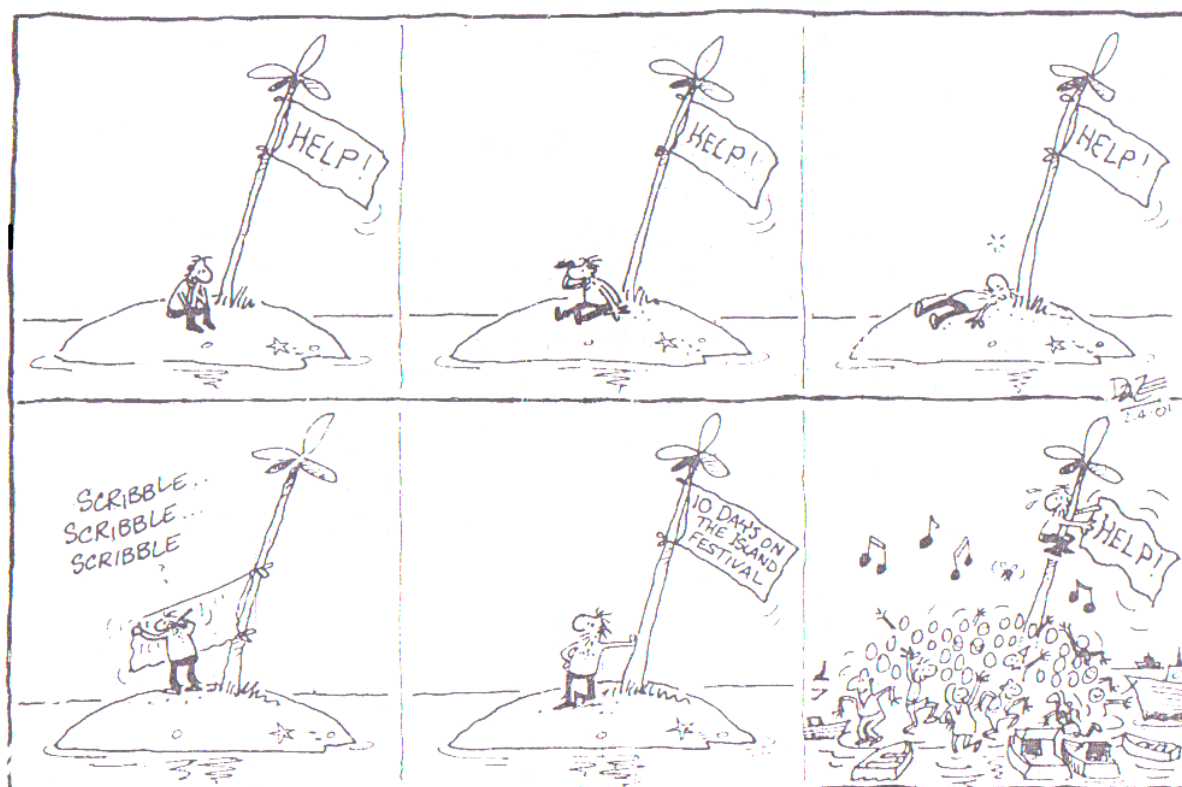


Figure 5-19 Island cartoon by Graeme Dazeley (2001)

Like the island-marooned character in Graeme Dazeley’s cartoon (Figure 5-19), by the end of the festival I was exhausted and overwhelmed by the sheer diversity and intensity of the events, performances and art works I had seen, and overhung by the imagining of things I had missed. I was inspired, and intrigued, by the depth of feeling that the festival had created. Responses to the festival, in terms of audience numbers, state, national and international media, and the experience of artists – both Tasmanian and from other islands – had been enthusiastic and engaged:

Archer said the success of the Festival would change the way people perceived Tasmania. ‘Perhaps the most astonishing figure is the \$4.3 million worth of publicity

generated by the Festival for the state,' she said yesterday. 'For once it wasn't the beautiful, green wilderness¹¹¹ in focus, but the cultural feel of the place. People saw a different way of doing things; they saw that an event of this magnitude could be pulled off in Tasmania ... During the first Festival you could see people were feeling very up and very engaged; they were getting out there and having a go at all the new ideas artists were presenting them with,' she said. 'I think what people want more than anything is to get the feeling back; they want to feel that way again' (Wood, 2001: 13).

Clearly, for the Artistic Director the inaugural festival was a resounding success, and she was already thinking of how to recreate that 'feeling' again. Yet, if *Ten Days on the Island* had achieved its governance objectives, how had it done so? In what ways had the festival reduced Tasmania's perceived parochialism, raised self-esteem and engendered pride in the State's achievements? How had a focus on 'the cultural feel of the place' rather than 'the beautiful, green wilderness' changed perceptions of the island, engendering Tasmanians to see 'a different way of doing things'?

(2) An elaboration of the festival according to its key features

Through the workings of the festival, the governmental dream of solving the 'Tasmanian problem' that was a core impetus for a major cultural festival was articulated into a number of relatively coherent patterns that became distinctive features of *Ten Days on the Island*. Given the tension between the 'eternal optimism' of governmental programs and the 'congenitally failing' character of governance in practice, to what extent, and how, had the translation of that dream through the performance of the festival been achieved? Had the festival in its varied and multiple performances of people and place brought about a different Tasmania, an alternative to the twentieth century governmental diagnosis of a 'Tasmanian problem'? What had been the governmental effects of the art that had been mobilised to act upon the subjectivities of Tasmanians and the place of Tasmania? Stanley Waterman (1998: 58) noted some of the spatial tensions implicit within the ambitions of arts festivals:

¹¹¹ See also Ray Arnold (2001) for a similar claim that, 'for once', it wasn't the island's wilderness that defined Tasmanian arts practices.

A festival's designers use it to (re)construct the place at which it is held. In so doing, successful festivals create a powerful but curious sense of place, which is local, as the festival takes place in a locality or region, but which often makes an appeal to a global culture in order to attract both participants and audiences.

In *Ten Days on the Island* one aspect of that spatiality was clear: islandness, long identified by government as a critical problem, had been celebrated as a positive value for the State. Celebrating islandness itself amounted to a sufficient achievement for the organisers, and certainly was a decisive break with the past. Yet in terms of its key features the following examination of the festival's performance indicates considerable complexity in terms of how the festival had re-positioned Tasmania by working through and re-configuring the ontological relations that composed its islandness.

To examine the key features of *Ten Days on the Island* is especially pertinent because the inaugural festival became the model for subsequent biennial festivals. On the basis of the success of the 2001 *Ten Days on the Island*, later instantiations repeated the festival's central contours as: (1) a multi-arts and curated festival; (2) international in scope; (3) distinctly Tasmania; (4) decentralised; (5) celebrating island cultures; and (6) held together through the figure of island. Taking these characteristics in turn, I elaborate on how they have functioned in the workings of the festival, and specifically how they relate to the governmental re-positioning of Tasmania.

1. Multi-arts and curated festival

From the outset *Ten Days on the Island* 'burst onto the arts scene' as a significant and powerful new 'cultural broker' that sought to initiate, mediate and control a diverse range of art experiences. The festival featured "music, songs and dance ... stories, poetry and drama ... painting, sculpture and crafts" (Bacon, cited in TDOTI, 2001a: preface). It also included literature, circus, diverse visual arts, street entertainment, parties, workshops and demonstrations, forums and discussions, films, food and wine events. *Ten Days on the Island* was not predominantly a music festival or a literary festival, for example, though

some established cultural events were encouraged to attach themselves to the festival.¹¹² The significance of a “multi-arts program” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 4) was related to a requirement that the festival engage the *whole* of Tasmania. Art was envisaged as a means of acting on the totality of Tasmanian ‘culture’; therefore a multiplicity of art-forms reflecting the diversity of Tasmanian art practices and engaging numerous Tasmanian audiences was critical to the sheer range and scope of governmental ambitions imagined for the festival. The catholic focus of the festival underscored its requirement to support and foster all of Tasmania’s creative arts activity in order to showcase Tasmania as an island of innovation and artistic ability to as many audience members as possible. As such, it sought not to alienate or exclude any particular section of the Tasmanian arts community or audience segment. Typically low ticket prices¹¹³ for key festival events, the scheduling of many free events, and the diversity of art forms staged in dozens of locations, made *Ten Days on the Island* accessible to many Tasmanians. Festival organisers noted that

given the level of support that we get from the State Government, there is absolutely an undertaking on our part to make sure that we try and provide a program that offers [performances to] a really wide cross-section of ages, interests, audience types: we do everything from classical through to world music, with a bit of pop-rock in the middle (Int007).

While the exhibition of diverse art-works was central to engaging multiple Tasmanian audiences, art practices and places, that diversity was controlled and organised by someone who could provide an overarching vision and drive for the festival. Typical of the vast majority of arts festivals, *Ten Days on the Island* employed a high profile, well-respected, charismatic, very competent arts professional as an artistic director to curate the festival. The ‘gatekeeper’ (Waterman, 1998) role of the artistic director included negotiating with existing art professionals, vetting works for inclusion, selecting events, performances

¹¹² For the first time in its history, the well-established Hobart Fringe Festival – held over ten days immediately prior to the 2001 *Ten Days on the Island* – finally had a major cultural festival to which it might be marginal. In 2003 the Tasmanian Readers and Writers Festival and a meeting of the Australian Cultural Ministers’ Council were both held during *Ten Days on the Island*.

¹¹³ Generally, tickets for major festival events ranged in price from approximately \$10 to \$40, with many costing \$20. There were also concession, student and family-group tickets that offered substantial reductions on full-price. The most expensive event listed in the festival program was \$120 for a cooking master class and dinner with Stephanie Alexander.

and works from Tasmania and islands around the world, commissioning new works, and nominating where events were placed. Those curatorial activities were seen as mandatory to ensure the festival's ability to deliver key outcomes for Tasmania: a program of 'high' artistic standard that maintained the theme of island cultures would support the values of Brand Tasmania, engender pride in the State's achievements, create positive national and international media attention for the state, and foster the arts in Tasmania. Such a "carefully curated and concentrated arts program" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 5), displayed in terms of control over the content, setting, audience and experience of the arts, was thought to be necessary in order to achieve the aims of the festival. In the MCFT/Steel (1998: 5) report it was argued:

It is essential that the festival programs are curated and do not consist, like many other so called 'festivals' both here and interstate, of a collection of events which are happening anyway, often devised by and the financial responsibility of a wide range of people and organisation, and given a marketing umbrella by the 'festival'. All participants must be of the highest possible professional standard, appearing in the program by invitation of the artistic director.

However, the controlling curatorial function of the Artistic Director was in tension with the requirement to foreground artistic and audience diversity. One place that the tension between control and multiplicity was apparent was in the festival's content. The festival concentrated more heavily on the performing arts (dance, theatre circus and puppetry) than on other art forms.¹¹⁴ The Artistic Director of the festival, Robyn Archer, and the Program Manager, Elizabeth Walsh,¹¹⁵ acknowledged that their backgrounds and expertise were principally in the performing arts. They also believed that the performing arts in

¹¹⁴ Of the 60-odd discrete art events in the inaugural festival, one-third related to the performing arts. The next highest category was music (14); visual arts, including film (13); literature and 'discussions' (8); sculpture and craft (4); and food (2). Additionally, the performing arts dominated the content of the festival program brochure by appearing on 11 of the first 15 pages and in total comprised 17.5 pages of the 49 page document. By contrast, music events took up 10.5 pages and the visual arts 6 pages. Counting multiple performances there were "54 paid events and 34 free events staged at 32 locations throughout the State" (Bacon, cited in Parliament of Tasmania, 2001d: n.p.).

¹¹⁵ Archer held the curatorial position of Artistic Director in 2001. Later that position was renamed Artistic Advisor (2003) and then Advisor to the Program (2005). Walsh held the position of Program Manager in 2001. In 2003 and 2005 she was the Executive Producer, which gave her more of a role in programming art content. Walsh replaced Archer as Artistic Advisor for the 2007 festival, a position she held until the close of the 2011 festival.

Tasmania needed additional support, by comparison with better established arts such as painting, sculpture and literature, which they saw as more individualised and solitary and hence more typically 'island-based'. Milne (2001: 43) applauded the tactic by which many state-of-the-art international performances were brought to Tasmania:

Given the pressure that Archer's programming has placed on the capacity of the actor/performer to carry the impact of dramatic narrative, it's not surprising that the absolute highlights of this performer-driven festival were two more plays with multiple character transformations but with minimal sets, costume-changes or any other technology bar clever lighting and some sound effects.

In 2001 (as in later festivals) organisers had to bring off an ambitious project within a comparatively modest budget. Limited resources were one reason for the selection of works that had a minimum of performers, stage-props and expensive freight. However in effect, an emphasis on the performing arts placed the body of the artist as central to the types of art experiences that the festival staged. In contrast to works that might be inaccessible to Tasmanian audiences in terms of cultural differences, such as language, the physical presence of artists spoke directly to the lived embodied experience of islanders.

The commanding presence of bodies was apparent in works such as *The Water Carriers* from Reunion Island. In this performance, with nothing other than simple props and bodies that morphed from "a family of monkeys, the next a tribe of warriors or a group of women" (Bowen, cited in TDOTI, 2001a: 7), a story about the power of water to "link men and worlds" was communicated through "movement, energy, [and] image" (Moucazambo, cited in TDOTI, 2001g: [7]). Even where there was a shared language, bodies still dominated the performances. In the Irish *Alone It Stands* both language and bodies were contorted and twisted with "a bunch of exceptionally talented Irish actors playing 62 roles – including a dog (you should hear those Kiwi accents!)" (TDOTI, 2001a: 4). And in the Irish *Ballads*, dancers "developed a new dance language" (Webster, cited in TDOTI, 2001d: [3]) to express "harrowing stories of destitution, workhouses, evictions, emigration, death and survival of a starving nation" (Bolger, cited in TDOTI, 2001d: [8]). Highlighting the body of the artist in performances directed audience attention to the visceral, emotional, and experiential in islander identity.

The diversity of art works, and in particular of curated performing arts, exhibited in the festival brought to Tasmania art experiences that were imagined to be unobtainable locally. There the function of art was to bring challenging cultural experiences to Tasmanians, to educate them in cultural matters, and to raise the cultural credentials and kudos of Tasmania. According to the Premier, *Ten Days on the Island* was an example “of how the arts can positively influence the perception of a community of itself and the image it projects to the world” (Pers001). Those works provided “opportunities for Tasmanians to broaden and extend their experience of the arts in ways that are otherwise largely unavailable to them unless they travel interstate” (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 7). Given that interstate was also, literally, overseas for Tasmanians, the festival’s international status and scope was complexly related to the island’s relation to mainland Australia.

2. *International scope*

The festival achieved its international scope and status by sourcing island artists from around the world. The significance of bringing “world-famous performers to Tasmania for the first time” (TDOTI, 2001a: preface) related directly to the project of re-positioning Tasmania’s islandness. International-sourced art functioned in two inter-related ways in the festival. First it positioned Tasmania as an island of the world, encouraging Tasmanians to make global comparisons and connections. The presence of international island artists and the substantive emotive content of performances and events forged complex inter-island associations with Tasmania. The second function of international art was to present mainland Australia as merely another ‘island’. In that sense, it downplayed the significance of Tasmanian comparisons with the mainland, even while a crucial impetus for international recognition was in order to re-imagine the relationship with Australia.

From the perspective of Tasmania and a specifically local audience, *Ten Days on the Island* included contributions from islands that were introduced as familiar and unfamiliar, obvious and uncanny. Some events and performers were from geographically and culturally remote islands such as Iceland and Taiwan. Others were from islands to which Tasmanians had long and inter-related histories through migration, such as Ireland, and geographical proximity, such as New Zealand. Others were from places more dubiously perceived as islands, such as Australia. Some islands appeared extremely well-connected to

their mainlands and difficult to imagine as isolated and insular, such as Singapore. Other international islands were presented as exotic and mysterious, such as Madagascar and Reunion Island. Such intense juxtaposition of a diversity of islands encouraged Tasmanians to make comparisons and identify similarities with other islands. Inter-island associations increased over the ten days of the festival, until a 'global scale' was apparent in the performances and events from islands around the world. As an island connected to a world of islands, Tasmania was no longer alone in its islandness, nor parochial in its distinctiveness.

One example of inter-island connection and comparison was the craft exhibition *Island to Island*. Featuring works and demonstrations of "how traditional baskets, rain capes and whariki (mats) are intricately woven from flax and the dried fronds of various plants", the exhibition juxtaposed "Palawa [Aboriginal Tasmanian] weavers ... side by side with Tiwi [Melville Island] and Maori [New Zealand] Weavers who will be working with their own techniques and plant fibres" (TDOTI, 2001a: 34). Throughout the festival multiple international situations of a comparable type were juxtaposed to the home experience of Tasmanians. One effect of the multiplicity of international arts, rich in symbolism, story, and setting, was to raise questions over the apparent intransigence of Tasmanian islandness. By showcasing other island cultures, festival events disturbed prior ontological compositions of Tasmania's island geography and made it available for re-positioning.

The geographical re-invention of Tasmania was especially apparent in one aspect of islandness, the relation of island and mainland. One straightforward means of acting on Tasmania's relationship to the mainland was to frame Australia as an island. There were many precedents for understanding the world's-smallest-continent as the world's-largest-island. For example, in Paul Theroux's (1992: 30) trip through the *Happy Isles of Oceania*, he had included Australia on his itinerary as a "gigantic Pacific island of Meganesia". More recently, Elizabeth McMahon (2005), in an analysis of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games closing ceremony, noted the organiser's mobilisation of 'island-continent' as the central geographical trope for presenting Australian national identity to the world: to promote "both its parochial charm and its global significance" (McMahon, 2005: 21). Certainly, Tasmanians had a long history of playfully referring to continental Australia as the 'island

to the north' or the 'bigger island'. In *Ten Days on the Island*, Australia was re-figured as an island by the simple act of its being a source of island events and performances. For example, the acrobatic performances of Circus Oz and Strange Fruit were both drawn from the mainland. Framing Australia as an island undermined the relation of other/microcosm that characterised Tasmania's relationship to mainland Australia, and emphasised island to island relations, potentially quite a different sort of alterity. That re-positioning was given added resonance through works that acted upon the land and water relation in islandness, especially insofar as bodies of water might connect people together, as well as render them separate.

Understandings of Bass Strait detailed in governmental inquiries had seen it as the island's principal water body and as a marker of Tasmanian backwardness and a problem to be overcome. In the national imaginary, the body of water offered geographical possibilities for envisaging Tasmania as "Australia's psychological sink" (Hay, 1996a: 74; see also Crawford, 1994) where the nation's haunting spectres of colonisation, especially the 'gothic' horrors of convictism and indigenous dispossession and genocide could be relegated, contained and quarantined (see Davidson, 1989; Mathews, 2006; Shipway, 2005b; Sousa, 2004; Thorne, 1990-91; Young, 1997). In one example, Australian novelist Hal Porter described an aeroplane flight he took from Adelaide in South Australia (via Melbourne in Victoria) to Hobart in Tasmania. During the flight – "jolting and dropping into chasms of nothing above the hell-broth of storm-clouds over Bass Strait and Tasmania" – Porter (1966: 195) feared encountering an island consigned to the past:

Let me meet no phantom from one past in this gap between another past and the future, between South Australia and Tasmania. I first see South Australia, just after sunrise, as a landscape pagan, bronze and violet, Polynesian. I first see Tasmania, just after sunset, as a landscape desperate, assailed, and sinister.

Bass Strait signified the disjuncture and difference of convict-settled Tasmania from free-settler South Australia, the only Australian state colonised without the trauma of the 'convict stain'. In the quote, temporal and spatial references are overlaid; the island contains the lingering malevolence of the empire's and nation's past, while the mainland, in an example of the transfigured 'continent-island', appears Polynesian, a pagan oceanic

promise for renewal. Finding a Hobart hotel room to spend his first night, Porter (1966: 196) struggles to sleep against

an instinct warning me that I am on an aggrieved island, that the water gobbing in the roof-gutters, and pouring off the asphalted roof can never wash away some taint of plague sensed everywhere. There has been a hell here to which Hell is a crèche ... the end-of-the-world precipices; a city momentarily like a setting for Jack the Ripper; grisly convict tales of cannibalism, sodomy and the triangle; the Australian legend that Tasmania is an island of incest and haunted architectural follies; and the sailors' stories ... that Hobart is one of the most immoral ports in the world.

In the national imaginary exemplified by Porter, Tasmania's notoriously unrelenting rain could never wash away the aggrieved island's past or transport it from its precipitous position at the end-of-the-world, it would remain "an ugly trinket suspended at the world's discredited rump" (Porter, 1961: 9). But references to bodies of water in *Ten Days on the Island* effected just such a transformation, connecting Tasmania with other islands through the medium of water. The Premier (TDOTI, 2001a: preface) argued for the power of water to link Tasmania with an international fraternity when he suggested that islanders "have an affinity with the sea. The history of every island on the globe is entwined with the world's maritime history".

There were many examples in the festival of the ways in which water could connect islanders together. Helga Arnalds' *Leif the Lucky One* used puppetry to retell the saga in which seafaring and enterprising Icelanders voyaged by water to discover continental America centuries before later European powers made similar journeys. The music of Malagasy singer and guitarist D'Gary was, according to the festival program, "at once close to tradition and yet strikingly modern, pared down but perfectly sophisticated", qualities which meant it could move like water, spreading "beyond the shores of the Great Red Island to touch upon the universal" (TDOTI, 2001a: 6). During the festival D'Gary's music flowed through many particular places, including Launceston in the north, Hobart in the south, Strahan on the west-coast, and Ross in the dry midlands of the island. *Leif the Lucky One* had voyaged extensively within the island's internal archipelago: Hobart, Rokeby, Ross, St Marys, Deloraine, Devonport and Ulverstone, as well as to King Island in Bass

Strait. The towels of John Vella's relatives were emblematic of a Maltese diaspora, and having travelled far and wide, were hung out to dry over the balconies of Salamanca Square apartments. Islanders, it seemed, could be great travellers, water providing a universal medium for archipelagic movement, rather than being insular and isolating.

The festival's varied references to relations of land and water from islands around the world effectively demoted Bass Strait from its function as the island's source of difference with respect to the mainland to only one of many bodies of water that could define Tasmania. The performers comprising Te Vaka were drawn from islands in the South Pacific, while the David Chesworth Ensemble (from Australia) played an *Exotica Suite* that featured "'incredibly strange' South Sea ambiances and 'jungle' rhythms", "the imagined music of 'exotic' far-off lands" (TDOTI, 2001a: 18). Other seas and oceans promised different possibilities for intimacy and proximity that reached out beyond Tasmania's status as Australia's detached and often forgotten 'appendage'.

The extent to which water ways and currents engaged the island both nationally and internationally was evident in the inaugural Tasmania Pacific Region Prize "for the best novel written by a resident or citizen of Australia, New Zealand or Melanesia" (Arts Tasmania, 2001: [1]). Premier Bacon had personally overseen the establishment of the \$40,000 literary prize¹¹⁶ – "the most lucrative prize for a single book yet developed in Australia" (Arts Tasmania, 2001: [1]) – and he saw its oceanic focus, the Pacific region, as part of a wider imperative to relocate Tasmania. The vision Bacon held for the festival was refracted through perceived local, national and international objectives of the prize:

To develop a culturally significant event that will sustain a high national profile and maintain a high status within the arts community and the broader public;

¹¹⁶ In addition to the main prize there was also a 'People's Choice Prize' and, from 2003, a separate \$10,000 prize for poetry and a \$25,000 prize for non-fiction (awarded in 2004 as part of the bicentenary of Tasmania). In 2005 a new \$10,000 prize was initiated: "There is no geographical limit to where the entrants live and no limitation on the type of book or its contents, but the subject matter must be Tasmanian" (Giddings, cited in Sutherland 2004: n.p.). In 2007 a new structure of three prizes was initiated: the \$5,000 Margaret Scott Prize ('for the best book by a Tasmanian writer'); the \$5,000 University of Tasmania Prize ('for the best book by a Tasmanian publisher'); and a \$25,000 Tasmania Prize ('for the best book with Tasmanian content in any genre'). This emphasis on *Tasmanian* (authorship, publication, and content) heralded a shift away from the initial idea of the literary prize as open to authors from the Pacific region.

To ensure that the prize will have substantial benefits for literature, the Tasmanian community and the Tasmanian State Government; and

To raise the profile of Tasmania as a state of cultural excellence and highlight the significance of literature to Tasmania and the achievements of Tasmanian writers (Arts Tasmania, 2001: [1]).

Ten Days on the Island's Artistic Director (Archer, 2001a: 10) displayed her grasp of the governmental constitution of islandness within the festival when she summarised the significance of the literary prize for Tasmania:

Tasmania puts herself on the world arts map, and nowhere as confidently as in the awarding of the first Tasmanian Pacific Region Prize for literature. The smallest state in Australia has revealed the measure of its great heart and the way it has learned to value writers and the way these islands nurture them. By extending the prize to the best new novels from New Zealand and Melanesia, Tasmania reveals herself as quintessentially international and regional. It casts off the cloak of parochialism with one dramatic gesture. This prize sits perfectly in the context of the first celebration of international arts on the island.

In Archer's view (see also Archer, 2001b), Tasmanian benevolence (in funding Australia's richest literary prize), critical judgement of literature, and understanding of the conditions necessary for great literary production, guaranteed a cultural inversion: the conjunction of an expansive international and regional ambit for the literary prize ensured the dissolution of the island-State's parochialism into the waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The notion that Tasmanian success would only come when Tasmanians ceased comparing their 'island lifestyles, island economies and island communities' with mainland Australia is a familiar refrain. For example, when I asked the Chairman of Brand Tasmania why the organisation was concentrating on achieving international, rather than national, recognition for Tasmania, he replied:

if we are able to continue to enhance the reputation and the profile of Tasmania internationally, it does have a strong influence on the confidence of the people in the State. I mean, how many times do you read or watch TV where people talk about how

cold it is in Tasmania; it's always raining in Tasmania; 'two-headed' Tasmanians. There is a real put down, particularly in this country, about Tasmania. That doesn't exist overseas (Int019).

For Brand Tasmania, international recognition and affirmation was required for the State to shed the negative identifications that stemmed from the island's relationship with the mainland. By engaging in comparisons with other islands of the world, Tasmanians could envisage themselves as members of a world of islands, so bypassing mainland Australia, which only ever fed "an inferiority complex" (Edwards *et al.*, 1999: [1]).

The bringing together of the international and the national was a formula evident in the Irish production of *Alone It Stands*. In the festival program, on the page that advertised *Alone It Stands*, readers were subtly reminded that Ireland was England's island 'other' in that Ireland was "Located in the Atlantic Ocean, 80km west of Great Britain" (see left-hand side of Figure 5-11). The palpable audience excitement induced by the Irish players' re-enactment of provincial Munster's win over the unbeatable All-Blacks, suggested that the story struck a particular chord with Tasmanians. In one sense it seemed to provide an external validation of the obdurateness of the relationship whereby Tasmanians experienced their identity as marginal and peripheral: winning against the odds in a David and Goliath battle providing the pleasure. However, as the program emphasised, the clash was "island v island" (TDOTI, 2001a: 4): Munster's victory was achieved against New Zealand, rather than against their mainland 'other' Great Britain. In that sense, Tasmanians were provided with an exemplar of the dynamic that understood the transformation of local identities as dependent on the achievement of international recognition.

In calling up inter-island comparisons, building a cosmopolitan fraternity of islanders and in locating mainland Australia as merely one member of a world of islands, alongside Tasmania, *Ten Days on the Island* engaged their audience in the possibility of opening Tasmanians to other, diverse enactments of their identity, and shifted Tasmania's spatiality away from the centrality of Bass Strait and mainland Australia. The novelty of juxtaposing islander artists with Tasmanians was in sharp contrast to the image of obdurate islandness presented in the governmental inquiries investigated in Chapter 3. Both strategies of governance sought to overcome Bass Strait, but in different ways. Whereas previous

governmental responses sought to bring Tasmania closer to the mainland, effectively seeking to drain the strait, the destabilisation of islandness in the festival was related to undermining comparisons with mainland Australia by emphasising watery proximities and intimacies. In that sense Tasmania's islandness, so constructed through the festival, might be stabilised as a member of a 'world of islands'. By providing a multiplicity of other islands from a diversity of geographical locations, of many different sizes and forms – a 'smorgasbord of islands' – the festival framed Tasmania as *one* island in an archipelago of *many* islands. However, if Tasmania was an island of the world, then it needed to be distinctive and uniquely so, and if the traditional source of that distinctiveness had been provided by problematic comparisons with the mainland, then the downplaying and bypassing of the mainland meant that other aspects of island distinctiveness would come to the surface. Critically, the ontological relations of islandness (land and water, island and mainland, island and island) that the festival worked through can be seen as always in tension with one another. While one engagement with islandness by the festival was to downplay Tasmania's relations with the mainland to effect a global re-positioning, that required negotiating other aspects of islandness, especially insofar as the distinctiveness provided by being surrounded by water was complexly related to the difference between islands and mainlands.

3. *Distinctly Tasmanian*

Ten Days on the Island was envisaged by Premier Bacon (cited in TDOTI, 2001a: preface) to be a "celebration of all the influences which make us unique". 'Us', in that context, sought to identify islanders in general and constitute Tasmanians in particular, where both were no longer seen as problematic. The festival's emphasis on being distinctly 'Tasmanian' was central to many of the outcomes it was intended to address, especially those that required the island to be unified internally to be projected externally. There are four interrelated ways in which the festival was produced as distinctly Tasmanian: in terms of home-grown art, audiences, the place itself, and the revisiting of Tasmania's past.

The Artistic Director of the festival drew a link between artistic production and place when she argued that the "way artists see the world, the way they are inspired, the way they create and produce their work is frequently, and powerfully, about where they are in the

world. *Ten Days on the Island* is very much about Tasmania” (Archer, 2001b: 8). *Ten Days on the Island* carefully balanced international island art with local Tasmanian art. The Premier (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001d: n.p.) boasted that “50 per cent of the program content was Tasmanian”: a high local proportion by comparison with Sydney and Melbourne festivals. Tasmanian artists were integral to the objective of showcasing Tasmania, their art works and performances were taken to reflect the distinctiveness of Tasmanian culture. One sponsor of *Ten Days on the Island*, who was also a member of the Brand Tasmania Council, summarised what he saw as the impact of foregrounding Tasmanian arts in the festival:

First, while the arts have always been important for Tasmania I don’t think people have truly appreciated the extent of the flow-on impacts of major festivals and arts-related events in terms of the economy of the island. And so I think that a festival both enriches the community and the people that participate. But it also has an effect of demonstrating that, if you like, the arts – as just an activity – is a significant contributor to the economy and the way of life and so on of Tasmania ... Second point is that as Tasmanians move forward in an understanding of what it means to be Tasmanian – from the old Tasmania to the Brand Tasmania – then a festival has a contribution to make. And thirdly I think it does provide some opportunities to showcase not just some of the best international talent, but also some of the best Tasmanian talent that is here, and to foster that (Int011).

The implied notion of a progressive transformation of identity – from ‘old Tasmania’ to ‘Brand Tasmania’ – which was necessary for Tasmanians to solve the Tasmanian problem, was bound up in a celebration of Tasmanian culture via Tasmanian art. The contribution Tasmanian art could make to that transformation was in demonstrating to and educating Tasmanians about the qualities and attributes thought to be characteristic to islanders, especially entrepreneurial qualities such as being innovative, enterprising and creative. Tasmanian artists exhibited those qualities in their works, and Tasmanian artists were emblematic of the community, therefore showcasing Tasmanian art might engender those qualities more generally as a distinctly Tasmanian ‘way of life’.

Engagements with Tasmanians’ ‘way of life’ through art works was especially apparent in large-scale local productions that blurred the line between performer and audience, such as

Stella Kent's *Our Path* and IHOS Opera's *Sea Chant*. *Our Path*'s celebration of the twin achievements of the nation's federation and Launceston as the first town in the southern hemisphere to turn on electricity involved "professional actors ... supported by students and graduates from the School of Visual and Performing Arts" playing key characters, while local "community group members" were encouraged to "provide the excitement and drama of recreating an 1890s fair" (TDOTI, 2001a: 3). Likewise, *Sea Chant* involved significant participation from people who lived and worked in the small sea-side town of Triabunna to stage 'a truly local community project' that saw locals re-enact on stage the roles they played in real life.

Tasmanian audiences were central to the promotion of a festival that was to be distinctly different from "most of the existing festivals held around the world" (Bacon, cited in TDOTI, 2001a: preface). Notwithstanding the hopes of some in the tourist industry that the festival would attract tourists from inter-state and potentially overseas, the vast majority of festival attendees lived in Tasmania. *Ten Days on the Island* organisers thought "essentially, the festival's audience will predominantly be Tasmanian. That's who it's for. You would be lucky to get two percent [of audience members from inter-state and overseas] ... if you got to five or ten [per cent] within four festivals you would be laughing" (Int007). Thus, the festival constituted its audience as 'Tasmanians', meeting the governance goal of addressing audience members as 'Tasmanians'. *Ten Days on the Island* crossed many typical art and cultural boundaries, embracing high art and popular art as it enrolled local audiences and catered for the tastes of 'locals'.

Many speakers and works of art portrayed Tasmanians as resilient, adaptive and community-oriented islanders. Professor Dwyer used scientific and historical evidence to promote Tasmania as 'ideal' for genetic research because it had a narrow gene pool, stemming from the island's separation from the outside world, and a small, stable population. Those facts were more traditionally used to suggest that Tasmanians were vulnerable, inbred and parochial; *here they suggested economic possibilities for future development*, and challenged the notion of Tasmanian identity as a problem. To another audience, Justice Slicer gave examples of how law and government had been given specifically local interpretations in Tasmania. One conclusion seemed to be that small,

family-based island communities (those of Iceland and Tasmania for example) brought their own, unique style to public affairs. Tussles between protesting island-communities and those seeking to exploit islandness as a resource, for example the resistance Icelanders exhibited to their government's appropriation of their DNA, were seen as typical. Indeed, the distinctly Tasmanian character of its 'green politics' was also apparent in the festival's own 'controversy', an anti-logging rally and march that had been timed to coincide with the first day of the festival. In public response the Premier welcomed the protests, claiming the intensity of arguments over the environment as characteristic of Tasmanians and islanders more generally. With reference to the novels by Wayne Johnston, which detailed how Newfoundlanders had 'torn themselves apart' over whether or not to join the Canadian federation, Bacon (Rec007) purported that: "I would really likely to see *Ten Days on the Island* develop around it a huge community debate about lots of questions to do with islands". There it seemed that divisiveness was a welcome characteristic of islanders and Tasmanians.

Tasmania itself, as a place, was also central to the celebration of Tasmanian distinctiveness. The reciprocity of place and people was powerfully evoked in the many works that called up images, sounds, smells, tastes, and memories of Tasmania. The composer of TasDance's *Treasured Island*, Charlie Chan, had searched out and recorded a sonorous sense of place distinctive to Tasmania. Australian-renowned chefs Stephanie Alexander and Maggie Beer had presented feasts that "salute the qualities of the archipelago's renowned produce" (TDOTI, 2001a: 16). The exhibition of Tasmanian landscapes, *Between Phenomena: the Panorama and Tasmania*, had revealed "the characteristics of Tasmania ... showing an island that is circumscribed, interconnected and decidedly panoramic in its form" (TDOTI, 2001a: 35).

In those art works, the interactions between place and people were presented as active, forceful and conditioning elements in the lives and imaginations of Tasmanians. Tasmanians' reputed insularity was *inverted as a virtue*. Playwright Stella Kent felt that Tasmanian artists were more inclined than mainlanders to look into themselves, their community, their history, and their environment for their art. There could not be a clearer statement of this than the sightlines of John Smith and Penny Smith's *Viewfinder* that were

directed at an island and back at the viewer (Figure 5-9). In that work, inwardness expressed a connection between viewers and viewed that posited an authentic, and mediated, relationship between islander and island. The sightlines on an island also echoed governmental perspectives of Tasmania, by which it was seen as small and unified, surrounded by water and cut off from the mainland – and so divorced from the mainland point of view.

Tasmanians' memory of their past was proposed as another aspect of the State's islandness. A number of the festival's events involved revisiting Tasmania's past and re-enacting their moments of trauma. Audience members followed the murdering first settlers from Risdon Cove to Sullivan's Cove; listened to a poem that reflected on the colonists' tormenting of Tasmanian Aborigines; remembered the line of dogs that once kept savage guard over Eaglehawk Neck; and returned voluntarily to the dread Port Arthur prison. *Sea Chant*, near Triabunna on the east coast, engaged a local community in a performance of their region's history, with a mixture of pained nostalgia, affirmation of the present, and hope for the future. In other examples, Stella Kent's play reflected on how Launceston's strait-laced late-Victorian society had developed in tension with a 'Van Diemonian' convict class; and we watched a film in which five young Tasmanian Aboriginal youths traced their musical tradition back to their forebears on Cape Barren Island, and in the process were emplaced within a complex ongoing tradition. Less happily, Peter Pierce was struck by how the theme of Tasmania as a depraved convict community was kept alive in every Tasmanian joke. Ten years earlier Pierce had critiqued claims by Tasmanian-born novelist Christopher Koch that "the convict past is like a wound, scarring the whole inner life of Tasmanians" (cited in Pierce, 1990: 48; see also Koch, 1980, 1992; Wood, 2008). For Pierce (1990: 48), "that Tasmanians share a single 'inner life' or may be strangely in need of the wounds which guarantee that they have participated in history are the assumptions of a parochial consciousness". Later in that paper, Pierce seemed to have anticipated *Ten Days on the Island's* juxtaposition of Tasmanian 'parochial' distinctiveness with international island cultures, for in describing the actions of one of Koch's characters he diagnosed "a desperate desire on behalf of the Tasmanian-born ... for some similar experience of place as his own, such as mainlanders, ignorant of Tasmania's shaping geographical differences, can never share".

Some of the Tasmanian traits raised by the festival's identification of Tasmanians as islanders echoed the earlier government inquiries into the Tasmanian problem. The difference was that the inquiries positioned those features as characteristic of Tasmania *and* problematic for Tasmanians. Through *Ten Days on the Island* however, Tasmanian 'backwardness' had been transmuted into an authentic connection of people to place – a distinctive island culture. The 2001 festival affirmed Tasmania's islandness and agreed that it showed in certain ways what was distinctive about Tasmania as an island. The festival engaged in a collective performance of Tasmania through art holding up a mirror to Tasmanians and reflecting their characteristics as islanders. The image of Tasmania reflected back differed from the political-economic diagnosis of a 'Tasmanian problem', even while it emerged from the appraisal that Tasmanian culture was a problem and was directed towards the 'solution' of that problem. Overall, Tasmanian art performances, exhibitions and events amplified and intensified the image of Tasmania as an island community but, far from seeking the dissolution of those characteristics, on the contrary, it had *celebrated* islandness. One principal means of celebrating Tasmanian distinctiveness was through the festival's decentralised structure.

4. Decentralised festival

There were two key elements to the organisers' claim to have delivered a decentralised festival that was a cultural celebration of the "whole-island" (TDOTI, 2001a: 2). One related to the enrolling of Tasmania's diverse communities through the careful and considered placing of art events into many different locations around the island. A decentralised festival was to engender "a feeling of inclusion from ... normally disconnected communities" (Garcia, 2001: n.p.). However, the process involved complex negotiations with communities, and the effect often reflected the diverse interests of communities rather than a transparent translation of the governmental objective to bring the island together. The other process consisted of encouraging Tasmanians to mix, circulate and move within the island. Both strategies sought to engage Tasmania in a diversity of locations and communities, in what was paradoxically a foregrounding of Tasmania's decentralised population *and* an attempt to overcome its perceived parochialism.

True to its promise of being a State-wide celebration, the 2001 festival enrolled 32 different locations scattered around Tasmania. While performances were heavily concentrated in the major population centres of Hobart and Launceston, many small towns and villages, such as Burnie, Cambridge, Coles Bay, Deloraine, Franklin, Latrobe, Queenstown, Ross, Stanley, St Marys, St Helens, Strahan, Swansea, and Triabunna encompassed festival venues (see Figure 5.2). Specific sites, often recognisably oriented to wilderness and heritage tourism, such as Cradle Mountain, Cataract Gorge, Derwent Bridge, Port Arthur and Risdon Cove, were used as discrete landscape participants in the presentation of artistic works. In 'Meet the Makers', "a magnificent wilderness retreat nestled in ... pristine temperate rainforests" was the setting "to enjoy generous tastings of award winning local cheeses and cool climate wines" (TDOTI, 2001a: 16). The festival also highlighted the Premier's penchant for referring to Tasmania as an archipelago of 334 islands by staging performances of Icelandic puppetry on King Island and a visual/sound 'wilderness' residency on Maria Island, two of Tasmania's offshore inhabited islands.

The assemblages of art, place, and people staged by *Ten Days on the Island* through its decentralised structure were complex, contingent and indeterminate. The effects produced by placing events and performances into Tasmania's diverse places were unpredictable. Community involvement with art events involved organisers who were new to Tasmania seeking out places that might have appropriate facilities and be amenable to hosting events. Repeated tours of the island by festival organisers to visit potential festival sites were critical, because "you actually need to go and have a look at how people live, what are they doing". It was critical to "try and identify ... key catalysts around the State and to really work where you have already got energy rather than trying to create something where there's nothing" (Int007). Finding the right individuals, communities and places, and matching them with particular art events, was vital in order "to leave something behind and encourage people to embrace their own cultural perspective" rather than just "popping things all over the place" (Int007). Understanding how those communities might be part of the festival (what they wanted, who to consult, what art event might work) was difficult and at times seemingly impossible: "I'm not going to come and live here for a year to work out how to do it" noted one festival organiser (Int007). Engaging communities involved working with what particular places had to hand, which invariably involved

negotiating with diverse agendas, materials, desires, and practices of those places so as to assemble together the ‘right’ ingredients to produce the desired art experience.

The Artistic Director and Program Manager of *Ten Days on the Island* contended that placing events into 32 different locations was critical to the festival’s ability to claim a whole of island engagement with Tasmanians. However, they acknowledged that it had been an “organisational nightmare” (Rec007). Art gallery-owner Dick Bett (Int020) was more forthcoming about some of the intricacies that organisers faced.

I did *Sculpture by the Sea* twice down on the Tasman Peninsula and I spent the first two years on it up and down every week, chatting people up, trying to build the networks down there and all that kind of thing. And in the end we got virtually nowhere, and I spent five years doing those two events ... and I think all I got out of it in the end was local resentment ... It was a very, very frustrating situation. I could have done *Sculpture by the Sea* in Hobart so easily, because the networks were there, the willingness to participate in it was there, the [local government] municipality’s that much wealthier, and all these sorts of things. And, and we will probably do another *Sculpture by the Sea* and if it happens it will happen in Hobart. But it’s a pity, because it was a very, very good thing for the Tasman Peninsula.

In general, Bett attributed local resentment to parochialism, and he fleshed that out by identifying a number of issues that the Tasman Peninsula community was grappling with. His list echoed familiar contours of the Tasmanian problem:

the aftermath of the Port Arthur problem. Martin Bryant ... the community was actually really depressed ... it’s an extremely poor community ... the local [government] municipality is correspondingly very poor ... But at the same time we couldn’t even get them motivated to mow a bit of lawn or to grade a road, where the road had to be graded twice a year anyway. ... I don’t know whether it’s an inherent endemic problem ... I think it had a lot to do with an outsider being perceived as someone who was coming in and making a living off them, you know.

In describing his experience of working with one obvious internal island of Tasmania, the ‘virtual island’ of the Tasman Peninsula, Bett seemed to describe the sort of ‘island

community’ parochial resistance to governance that it was imagined the festival could address.

One means of reducing parochialism was to encourage Tasmanians to move around their island-archipelago, to experience art in places they might normally not have considered. While art offered a way into communities and places perhaps normally ‘closed’ to outsiders, the festival program promoted a ‘Grand Tour’, directing visitors and locals alike to embark on an itinerary of many places linked by experiences of art (Figure 5.20).

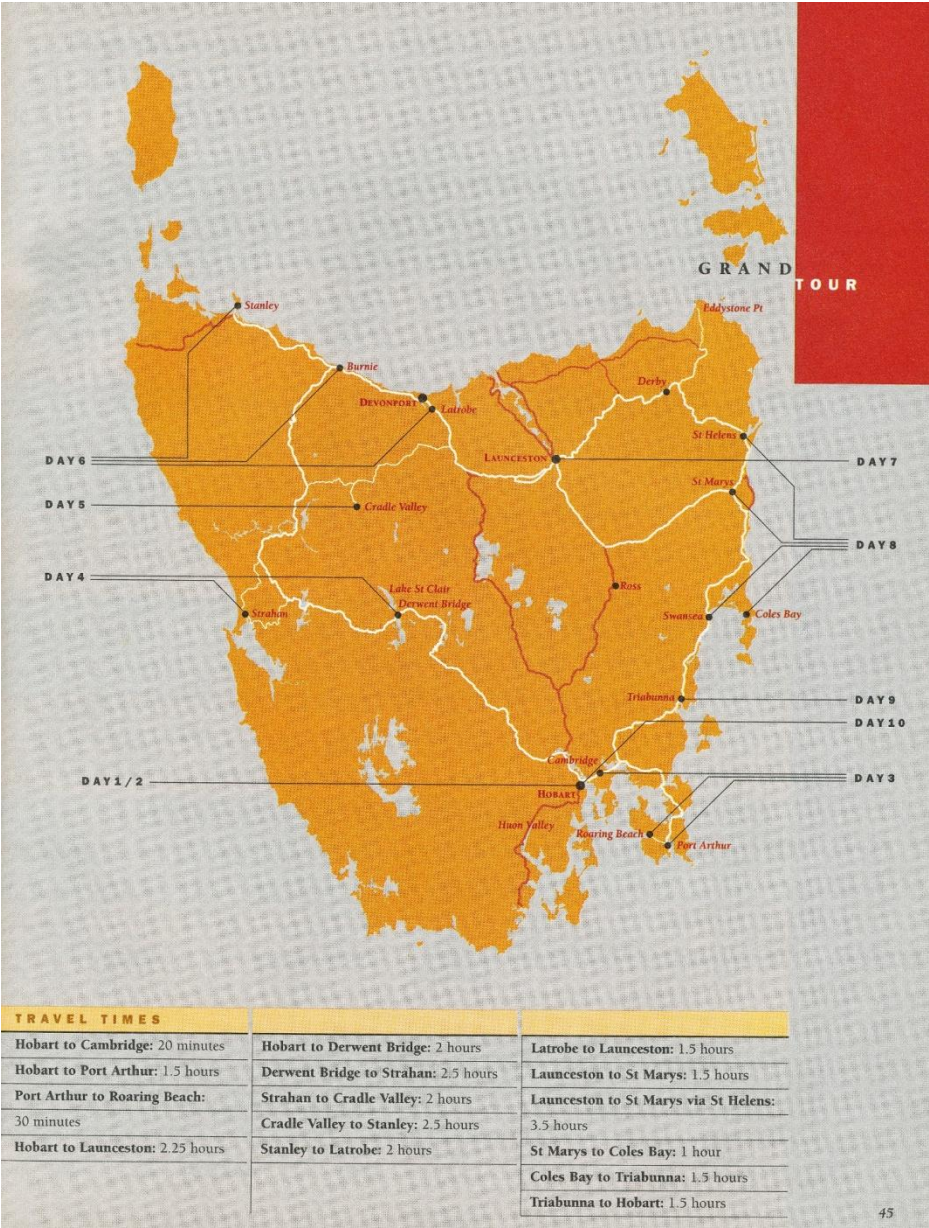


Figure 5-20 *Ten Days on the Island Grand Tour* (TDOTI, 2001a: 45)

Festival organisers took every opportunity to encourage Tasmanians to move about the island and experience a diversity of art works, both global and local, in their varied locations. On the last day of the festival the Premier (Rec007) noted some of the effects of encouraging Tasmanians to circulate:

there have been many people in Hobart that have discovered that it is not actually a life threatening experience to go north of Bridgewater [a suburb of Hobart on the road north to Launceston], and they have discovered some wonderful other places in the state. Places like Stanley ... and they say; 'Isn't Stanley beautiful, it's so beautiful'. And I say 'haven't you been here before, like, it is part of Tasmania'. So I think it has had a good effect spreading it around ... it has actually inspired people to move around the State ... The more we spread it over the State the more everyone benefits.

The imperative to get Tasmanians circulating was part of a desire to lessen the impact of the island's 'internecine antagonisms' and regional loyalties by bringing Tasmanians into closer contact with each other, to build trust through the experience of art: to show Hobart-bound islanders that other places in the island were also 'beautiful'. The governmental imperative within the festival to work through the Tasmanian archipelago in order to constitute a Tasmanian 'island community' in effect meant that *Ten Days on the Island* encouraged a type of ethnographic exploration of Tasmania by Tasmanians, an "ethnographic encounter ... expressed in material cultural form" (Hetherington, 2006: 599).

When she spoke about her experience of the first festival, Archer (Rec007) certainly saw herself as a participant-observer, if not an anthropologist, as well as an engaged curator:

Ten Days on the Island has been a chance to be able to look around and see where the strengths are ... Stanley was fascinating because [local government] councillors were there, and they were coming up and saying 'this is a fantastic event' ... And you can see that they are completely motivated. So that will make our tasks so much easier [next time]. And we are starting to pick up those pockets all around Tasmania. And when I say that an event like this has to have its roots in community that is not just the public face of things. The actual work itself can only happen if you have the support of the local community. If you don't have that, you can't do it and in the end you are imposing a view on the local community, it costs you ten times as much and in the end

it probably won't work anyway. Fortunately we haven't had any of those, but we want to build on those strengths more and more.

Enrolling pocket-sized communities from Tasmania's decentralised population structure was important to the idea that the festival could address Tasmanians as an entire island community. However, the imperative for the festival to have its roots in multiple communities to avoid imposing a view on the community was problematic given the governmental imperative to unify the divided island. Those problems were evident in Archer's (Rec007) response to a question about the success of the decentralised structure of the festival program:

We very, very purposefully made sure that there was something *exclusive* here in Hobart and something *exclusive* in Launceston ... [for example] *The Water Carriers* only played in Launceston. And many of the things were site specific so you absolutely had to be there ... But the feeling that it was *inclusive* was very much appreciated by everybody [emphasis added].

Locating events exclusively in Launceston *or* Hobart amplified and intensified the island's regional bi-polarity, and making many events site specific provided further opportunities for the exclusive enactment of community. The spatiality of island, as the organising trope for the festival, attractive for its carving out of a Tasmanian distinctiveness, magnified the boundedness of multiple internal communities. In performance, the desire to be inclusive and so render the island coherent enacted the divisions the festival sought to overcome. Similar tensions between the multiple and the singular, between difference and uniformity, and between particularity and universality, were evident in another key feature of the festival, its celebration of island cultures.

5. *Celebration of island cultures*

Ten Days on the Island was hailed as a celebration of diverse island cultures. The distinctiveness of each island culture was demonstrated through the idiosyncratic art performed by representatives from particular islands. Fiddlers' Bid, from the Shetland Islands, had a "unique sound ... developed from Shetland's rich tradition of fiddle music", the "ultimate in authentic Celtic music" (TDOTI, 2001a: 19). The Japanese Traditional and

Folk Dance Company, which presented *Islands of Japan*, expressed an “ancient” cultural lineage that “embodied in dance” Japanese “religious ritual”:

In 1603 Izumo-no-Okuni integrated these dances in Kyoto, and to ecstatic audience reception began a tradition which has been evolving to the present day. With music and exquisite costume, Japanese dance is a complete experience ... A must for anyone interested in dance and the surprising beauty of Japanese cultures (TDOTI, 2001a: 13).

A multiplicity of island art works underscored the idea of authentically different cultures and encouraged island to island cultural comparisons. The Artistic Director (Archer, 2001a: 10) noted that *Ten Days on the Island* “created strong potential for the juxtaposition of beautiful landscape and passionate story-telling which is at the heart of artistic expression. These are the shared experiences of other-islanders throughout the world”. The sense of art as a freedom of expression located materially in place and people, sought to mobilise the cultural relativism implicit in many island cultures to by-pass hierarchical conceptions of culture that would position Tasmania as trailing behind the mainland cities of Sydney and Melbourne. In effect, the arts festival staged ethnographic displays and performances of cultural difference (bodies, practices, languages, dress, customs and traditions) and sought an appreciation of the distinctiveness of individual island cultures. As a momentarily assembled live archive of island cultures, *Ten Days on the Island* positioned Tasmanians as reflexive anthropologists and persuaded them to investigate and explore those cultural differences in comparison to the possibility of their own distinctive island collective. What is ‘Tasmania’? Who are ‘Tasmanians’? Where have ‘Tasmanians’ come from? How might ‘Tasmanians’ live? What are the qualities, attributes and characteristics of ‘Tasmanians’?

The problem of Tasmanian cultural distinctiveness was interrelated to the festival’s claim for the distinctiveness of island cultures *per se*. The Premier introduced Tasmania’s inaugural cultural festival by asserting that “island dwellers are different from the masses of continent dwellers. We have skills, characteristics and attributes which set us apart”. The explicit slippage between masses of land and masses of people framed non-islanders as essentially homogeneous; continental dwellers were unfortunate to only have an “arbitrary line drawn on a map” to enact their identities. Islanders, by contrast, had “a sense of identity defined by a distinct coastline” (Bacon, cited in TDOTI, 2001a: preface). One

commentator noted the experimental objective of the festival: Archer's project of "inviting artists from other islands around the world to participate will test the hypothesis that island cultures are different from mainland ones" (Daw, 2001: 96). Islanders were united together on the basis of a relationship between people and place that evoked a specific physical and elemental determinant of identity, the encircling boundedness and spatial disjuncture of an island.

One generic configuration of islandness, especially evident in claims that islandness was primarily defined through the boundedness of land by water, was the imputation that islanders were authentic and autochthonous:

Okie Kano is an indigenous Japanese, an Ainu, from Japan's north island, Hokkaido ... Okie's songs are full of heart and brimming with energy as the words tell us about the natural wonders of Hokkaido, its water, its earthquakes and about the contemporary life of the Ainu people. The process of cultural reclamation and the stories of displacement reveal many similarities to indigenous Tasmanians (TDOTI, 2001a: 23).

Performances of islander 'aboriginality' ramified throughout the festival. The effect of linking island artists with their own islands was to suggest that a necessary connection existed between people and place. That relation characterised the distinctiveness of island cultures and seemed directed towards an appreciation of Tasmanians, both Aboriginal and 'other', as 'indigenous' to Tasmania, having developed an identity that was specific to place. Tasmania's local dance company Stompin Youth Dance, in their production *Placement*, sought to evoke reflections on the "human placement upon this land and [to] examin[e] concepts of people inhabiting place, place shaping people, people shaping people" (TDOTI, 2001a: 32). Tensions in the framing of settler Tasmanians as 'indigenous' through juxtaposition with other island cultures were apparent when the Artistic Director intervened into one poignant moment of reflection with yodelling, seemingly to avoid getting stuck in the problematic politics of Tasmanian 'indigenous' identity.

Some performers and speakers proposed that there were qualities universal to islands: islanders were said to have long memories, to be story-tellers, to hand down stories from generation to generation, to be especially interested in getting together for everyday

pleasures (like messing about with cars). It was said that islands exert a pull on those who go to live elsewhere (sooner or later they return) and that islands settled by large scale migration preserved deep memories of that migration. Islands near a mainland were thought to suffer from the relation, to be overlooked and dominated by their larger companion, and to see the imbalance of power in terms of marginalisation. Winning against such odds gave great pleasure to mainland-oppressed islanders. A number of Tasmania's cultural quirks were presented as being shared by Australians at large. Thus, the cult of bushrangers, the theme of migration, stories about adapting to a new country far from home, and the effects of larger and more powerful entities, were potent on the mainland as well as in Tasmania. One of the festival's conundrums was that some Tasmanian art may not have looked Tasmanian to some viewers: by comparison with 'exotic' international island art it could seem positively Australian. However, the sheer diversity of events drawn from other islands, many of whom were presented in conjunction with their mainlands, rendered the particularity of Tasmania's relation to Australia abstract and hence made it appear a universal and original quality of all islanders. As such, the festival both celebrated a universal ground in Tasmanian islandness and a dance of Tasmanian uniqueness. What sustained that multiplicity of island cultures, mediating between the particularity of different island cultures and the appeal to a universal and shared identity, was 'island'.

6. *Island*

Such a politics of multiple cultures required a concomitant investment in the political function of a relatively stabilised entity: what holds *Ten Days on the Island* together is the organising trope of island, although the island is not only a trope, but the kind of mobile assemblage or 'quasi-object' composed from the ontological relations of islandness described in Chapter 2. That is, island is constructed to provide the critical impetus, justification and substance for a series of relationships between and among far-flung places with diverse cultures, peoples and situations. Just as island is composed from various global islands that serve the internationalising of Tasmania, so, too, island is assembled from the festival's many arranged marriages of outside islands and Tasmania's internal archipelago of places and peoples. The careful enacting of these ephemeral marriages,

arranged within the governmental project of lifting Tasmanians' morale, reducing parochialism, and creating a harmonious island community, is organised according to the spatiality of island the festival constructs. When she first struck upon the theme of islands, the Artistic Director noted that she was concerned about the extent to which it might limit the art works available. She described the experience of passing

through this pinhole of 'the islands of the world' and once you're through the pinhole and it feels like you're reducing your options of course you go through the pinhole like *Alice in Wonderland*, come out the other side and the pinhole just, the world expands again. And it was perfectly clear from the minute I did that exercise that we would be able to program from islands for the next hundred years (Rec002).

That Tasmanians were encouraged to construct islandness in terms of comparisons *amongst* islands and *between* Tasmania and other islands was apparent from the festival program, where islander performers were tagged with the particular islands they came from (see, for example, the right-hand side of Figure 5.13). In an inset panel beside the program notes for each major event, islands from around the world were described according to a standardised set of features, such as geographical maritime location, distance from a mainland, area, and population. For example, Madagascar was D'Gary's home country (TDOTI, 2001a: 6):

Situated approximately 400km off the south-east African coast of the India Ocean, Madagascar (comprising the world's fourth-largest island and a number of very much smaller islets) covers an area of 587,040km². Pop: 14,873,587.

Singapore was the home of the T'ang Quartet (TDOTI, 2001a: 17):

The island city-state of Singapore is located off the southern-most extremity of the Malay Peninsula to which it is linked by a causeway. It comprises the main island of Singapore and 57 smaller islands, covering a total of 620km². Pop: 3,531,600.

The Shetland Islands was the home of Fiddlers' Bid (TDOTI, 2001a: 19):

An archipelago ... located off the northern coast of Scotland, in the North Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago consists of about 100 rugged islands and islets, of which only 19 are inhabited. Area: 1,438km². Pop: 23,232.

In effect, those inset panels, in concert with symbolically fecund performances of island, created a metrology, or topological construction, of islandness involving relations of land-water, island-continent and island-island. Tasmanians were encouraged to locate their island's geography within relations of disjuncture, difference and repetition. Theatre North, which produced Stella Kent's *Our Path*, was from Tasmania, which (see Figure 5.17)

is the southernmost state and lies 240km south of the Australian mainland. Made up of 344 islands the total area is 68,331 sq km or 0.9% of the total area of Australia. Pop: 472,300.

While the panel insets in the festival program envisaged islandness in terms of predominately physical and 'factual' geographical characteristics, art performances and events added a heterogeneous mix of human and non-human elements to the topological construction of islandness. In *Ten Days on the Island*, islands were presented in numerous spatial, discursive and social situations, emphasising a variety of particularised workings through of the relations of islandness.

Conclusion

The *Ten Days on the Island* festival set out to achieve the varied governmental objectives detailed in the *MCFT/Steel Report*. Those objectives were worked through the festival as a spatial re-ordering and re-positioning of Tasmanian islandness. The festival called up inter-island global comparisons and contacts, proximities and intimacies, which in effect re-positioned Tasmania's external relations from facing mainland Australia to facing other islands. *Ten Days on the Island* opened Tasmania to other, diverse, readings of its identity, shifting Tasmania's island spatiality away from the centrality of Bass Strait and mainland Australia towards an archipelagic 'world of islands', where Tasmania was one amongst many. The festival effected a transformation in Tasmania's island status by variously downplaying, bypassing and inverting its relationship to mainland Australia – a complex history perceived by many as entailing only negative connotations and comparisons – and re-positioning Tasmania as an internationally significant island amongst others. The festival presented Tasmania as an island in a 'sea of islands' yet the spectre of the island's perceived alterity to mainland Australia hovered around the construction of a distinctly

Tasmanian island culture. Likewise, it was claimed that an island within a diverse group of islands would shape its own identity, yet just as often the essentialist claim was made that islanders share a common geographical heritage, binding one island to another, and binding together the internal and often divisive archipelago, Tasmania's archipelago, for instance. These were some of the contradictory meanings to be negotiated in the cultural, geographical and temporal production of the *Ten Days on the Island* international arts festival.

As noted previously, the deployment of island cultures involved a complex spatiality and mobilised a diverse and often paradoxical discourse. The re-ordering of Tasmanian islandness that the festival engendered was only achieved by working-through the assembled socio-historical and material practices of Tasmania. Such re-ordering was bound to have unanticipated consequences, especially in so far as it engaged with multiple actors with diverse agendas, and also provided actors with new agendas. Some tensions were already apparent in the recommended structure for the festival and the projected outcomes that a successful arts festival would bring about. Further tensions arose from the enactment of the first festival itself, especially in so far as the festival involved complex negotiations and exchanges amongst its constituent actors and their different interests. As such, the enrolling of various entities into the festival entailed a shifting and destabilised performance of the governmental imaginaries themselves.

The elucidation of the central features of *Ten Days on the Island* highlights how the festival constituted the internal islander culture of Tasmanians as singular, coherent and unified by working through the multiplicity, difference and diversity of art forms, island cultures and Tasmania's own internal archipelago. The multiple governmental objectives that structured the workings of the festival were centrally related to the celebration of islandness as a resource for local identity and global development. The Premier made this link between the internal constitution of island identity and external links to international island cultures clear when he asserted that

Tasmanians are now recognising the uniqueness of our island status and through the *Ten Days on the Island* festival, are able to identify as part of the global community of

islands and are to participate in the many cultural exchange opportunities this status offers (Pers001).

In the next chapter I explore how the concerted public effort involved in transforming Tasmania from its overly-determined place as an appendage to mainland Australia, to another place in an archipelago of islands, foundered on an environmental controversy over the sponsorship of the festival by the State Government's business enterprise, Forestry Tasmania.

Chapter 6 - Who speaks for Tasmania?

Seldom in the history of Australian festivals can there have been such a felicitous and powerful combination of political and artistic vision.

Anthony Steel, 'Review of *Ten Days on the Island*' 2004: 4

Introduction

In the eyes of its organisers, many artists and audience members, Tasmania's first international arts festival had been an unparalleled success, bringing about a "tangible sense of pleasure and pride right across Tasmania" (Archer, cited in TDOTI, 2001b: [2]). Two years later claims of success appeared ambivalent, when controversy over sponsorship of the festival broke out and Tasmanians returned to what many understood to be familiar political modes of acrimonious division, antagonism and bitterness. As the island's political cultures, habits and histories asserted themselves, disappointment, shame and anger supplanted the atmosphere of collective and unified pride in the distinctiveness of Tasmanian culture engendered by *Ten Days on the Island*. The first festival had generated positive media coverage that had "resounded throughout Australia and the world" (TDOTI, 2001c: 9); the second focussed the media spotlight on an entirely different sort of performance. The Artistic Director's delight at the success of the 2001 festival was palpable: "everybody involved, from international artists, to the local community, to the media embraced the celebration of island culture and the unique qualities that living on an island engenders" (Archer, cited in TDOTI, 2001b: [2]). In contrast, her assessment of the 2003 festival was circumspect: "*Ten Days on the Island* is a very good thing – especially for Tasmania" (Archer, cited in TDOTI, 2003b: [3]).

The 2003 festival provoked controversy a year before the event, following the announcement in April 2002 that Forestry Tasmania, a State Government Business Enterprise (GBE) responsible for managing publicly-owned forestry resources, was to be a major sponsor of the festival. On the grounds that the GBE was complicit in unsustainable practices, and especially the logging of old-growth forests of high conservation value, the announcement outraged some Tasmanian artists and sections of the Tasmanian

community. That it was Premier Bacon, in his capacity as Chairman of the *Ten Days on the Island* Board, who had formally invited Forestry Tasmania to be a sponsor was equally offensive to some.

Controversies over Tasmanian environments are pivotal to Tasmanian subjectivities, especially since 1973 when impetus was given to the birth of the island's environmental movement by the damming and flooding of iconic Lake Pedder and the subsequent environmentally successful fight over the damming of the Gordon River in the early 1980s (Crowley, 1999, 2000; Green, 1981). Intense and well-publicised (gaining national and international coverage, see Hutchins and Lester, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Lester, 2006) environmental conflicts over hydro-electric power schemes gave way in the mid-1980s to confrontations over old growth forests (Blackburn and Stone, 2003; Gee, 2001; Haynes, 2006; Tranter, 2009). Typical of fights over 'resource use' from other parts of the world, Tasmanian environmental politics are routinely characterised by "confrontation between the interests of resource extraction and advocates of preservation" (Rossiter, 2008: 113; see also Kellow, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1987, 1988). It is also generally understood that the relatively pristine status of much of Tasmania's environment exists, in part, because the island has not experienced the sort of development to which mainland Australia has been subject; this paucity despite a pronounced statist developmentalism desirous of 'mining' the State's resources to the nth degree possible (Walker, 1999). However, over the last 30 years, beginning with environmental activists and more latterly by mainstream commentators, an argument is increasingly advanced that in such 'romantic' wilderness lies Tasmania's future; the island's 'nature' that was a marker of Tasmania's backwardness is increasingly taken to be a marker of its future economic possibilities.

Critically, Tasmanian writers and artists have been at the forefront of Tasmanian environmental politics, strategically deploying emotionally-charged depictions of 'wild' nature to bring national and international attention to the island's pristine beauty and threats from development (Bonyhady, 1996, 2000, 2004; Cranston, 2001; Geczy, 2004; Grant, 2001; Hay, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b; Haynes, 2001; Timms, 2003). Following in the footsteps of Tasmanian photographers John Watt Beattie (1859-1930) and Olegas Truchanas (1923-1972), Peter Dombrovskis' (1945-1996) photograph *Morning mist, Rock Island Bend* (Figure 6-

1), displaying the Franklin River in all its sublime majesty, was pivotal to the successful environmental campaign to save the river from hydro-electric dam inundation (Denholm, 2002; Haynes, 2002, 2006).



Figure 6-1 *Morning mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River* (1979)
Photo: Peter Dombrovskis (NLA, 2010c)

Images of *Morning mist, Rock Island Bend* were strategically deployed in the lead up to the 1983 federal election. In addition to being sent to “every household in every marginal electorate in Australia” (Haynes, 2002: 283), the image was published in major Australian newspapers on the eve of the election. The caption for the full-colour (Australian newspapers were at the time only black-and-white) image of rock and water wilderness, ‘Would you vote for a Party that would destroy this?’, has been widely attributed as a central factor in the election of a Federal Labor Government which resisted successive State Labor and Liberal government’s desire to build a dam, resulting in the eventual creation of the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and the listing of the site as part of a

Wilderness World Heritage Area (Buckman, 2008). As Roslynn Haynes (2002: 282-283) notes, the success of *Morning mist*, *Rock Island Bend* as a work of environmental art activism was to suggest that Rock Island is “a microcosm of Tasmania, the island state, and Australia, the island continent. If we permit its destruction are we not signing the death warrant of a state, a country?” It was in that sense that the saving of the Franklin River was only achieved through by-passing the wishes of the Tasmanian Government, forced by artist activists through an appeal to the ‘outside’. For Tasmanians who understood the dam as a means towards prosperity and development, the sidelining of their means of achieving progress was deeply resented as federal interference in ‘State’s rights’. Nevertheless, the Tasmanian Government did receive \$276 million in compensation (Pink, 2001).

Since the successful campaign to save the Franklin in 1983, Tasmanian artists and writers have continued to be central figures in the island’s environmental politics, constructing visual and narrative images of Tasmanian nature that sustain the island’s environmental activism. As noted above, environmental campaigns shifted in the late 1980s and early 1990s away from rivers and hydro-electric dams towards the island’s forests and Tasmania’s forestry industry. In that context Forestry Tasmania’s involvement so early in the preparation for the second *Ten Days on the Island* was viewed by many artist activists as evidence that the festival would be compromised by political interference. In a pamphlet distributed during the 2003 festival, a coalition of protesting artists described Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship as “a callous betrayal of the arts” — which is “why we cannot support *Ten Days on the Island*” (Artists for Forests, 2003: [1]). A year filled with acrimonious accusations between protesters, on one side, and Premier Bacon and the festival organisers, on the other side,¹¹⁷ ensured that parochialism and deep divisions were again exposed as the festival ceased to be effective as a means of constituting Tasmanians as an ‘island community’.

‘Artists for Forests’, the coalition of artists who opposed Forestry Tasmania’s association with *Ten Days on the Island*, raised alternative funding to replace Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship. But festival organisers, the Board and the Government would not accept

¹¹⁷ While the controversy tended to be constructed (especially in media reporting and through the actions of protagonists) around ‘two sides’ there were many different positions *within* and many similarities *between* supposedly opposing camps.

those funds on the grounds that to do so would set a dangerous precedent and sanction what they saw as censorship of the festival. In response, during the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*, Artists for Forests held an alternative event, 'Future Perfect'. Additional national and international exposure of the island's forestry practices occurred after German Nobel laureate Gunter Grass became a patron of Future Perfect, and as high-profile writers withdrew from *Ten Days on the Island's* signature literary event the Tasmania Pacific Region Prize. Future Perfect addressed itself to issues wider than forestry, and its organisers, writers and artists denounced the Tasmanian Government as a puppet of 'big business' and *Ten Days on the Island* as a 'motley art circus' complicit in the island's culture of 'oppression' and 'tyranny'. In short, the escalating public debate aired and amplified political divisions that ramified geographically and historically throughout the internal archipelago of Tasmania.

In Chapter 5, *Ten Days on the Island* was analysed as a technology of governance, a distinct means of re-ordering and re-positioning islandness in order to effect a transformation of Tasmania and Tasmanians. The specific assemblage of social, material and discursive entities brought together in the festival was both constituted by and constitutive of the governmental agenda to mobilise culture and solve the 'Tasmanian problem'. Resistance to the alignment of Forestry Tasmania with *Ten Days on the Island* had the effect of foregrounding governmental involvement with the festival and highlighting governmental ambitions for the event. For many Tasmanians, Forestry Tasmania sponsorship made *Ten Days on the Island* 'political' and, in that traditional sense, tainted its cultural ambitions. Accusations about the festival's political co-option met with counter-accusations that 'protestors' were exploiting the event for political purposes. Thus, one of the issues at stake in the controversy was a working through of the 'autonomy' of arts 'culture', the place of art, and relations between art and politics in Tasmania. In its second instantiation, *Ten Days on the Island* perversely, but productively, became a political site around which characteristics taken as peculiar to Tasmania resurfaced as 'problems'.

This chapter details how the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* festival 'failed' as a governmental project directed to accomplishing islander unity and the acculturation of Tasmanians. I chart how the festival failed in its governmental imaginary of a Tasmania bound together

through a cultural celebration of island culture and island place, and simultaneously contributed to the performance of Tasmania as a polarised and problematic State. Notwithstanding the acrimonious divisions and antagonisms the 2003 festival generated, I also trace how the controversy successfully created a public space for debate about the geographical and political effects of the instrumental use of 'culture' through an arts festival.

My aim in providing a detailed account of the controversy of the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* festival is to show how concerns over alignments between forestry practices and the event formed various constituencies striving to speak in the name of 'Tasmanians' and 'Tasmania'. Attentive to the framing of 'island' in this debate, I explore how conflict about Forestry Tasmania's involvement in the second *Ten Days on the Island* is a contestation over what sort of object Tasmania as an island might be and what sort of subjects Tasmanians as islanders might be. As such, representations to speak for Tasmania and on behalf of Tasmanians mixed the island's politics with epistemological claims to 'island' authority, and the island's 'natural' and 'cultural' qualities, momentarily ordered through the idea of island cultures, were opened for other ontological possibilities.

(1) Researching a controversy

The 2001 festival had been widely understood in Tasmania, especially by the Bacon Government and festival organisers, as an unprecedented success. While a number of tensions had been apparent (for example, those relating to its decentralised structure), the overall public positive assessment of the event had seen it linked to a host of other developments that were also thought to be in the process of "correct[ing] perceptions of Tasmania as a perennial 'backwater'" (Eslake, cited in Neales, 2005: 30-31). Beginning from around 2000, Tasmania began to experience a revival in its fortunes. The long-depressed local real estate market was 'booming', and house prices soared, especially for seaside and country properties, in no small measure due to interstate investors.¹¹⁸ Lachlan Colquhoun (2006: 19) reported to readers of the London *Financial Times* that:

¹¹⁸ Martin Harris (cited in Colquhoun, 2006: 19), from the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania, noted that "in the peak of the boom perhaps 30 per cent of the sales of residential property were mainland buyers ... rather than buy one property in Sydney, they would buy five or six in Tasmania".

After decades of neglect, the island has since 2000 been attracting a stream of Australian mainlanders, expatriates and international investors. They are drawn in by a combination of cheap but rapidly increasing prices, a stunning unspoilt environment and a developing cultural scene, including arts tourism and food-and-wine communities.

Local demographer Natalie Jackson (2005: 25) noted that “Tasmania’s relative housing affordability was later identified by the Government as the primary driver of interstate arrivals” as for the first time in decades the island’s population experienced minor, but politically significant, net population growth. Tourist numbers were also increasing, partly because of a redirection of Australian travellers choosing Tasmania as a safe ‘overseas’ destination in the wake of the September 2001 terrorist attack which had brought down the World Trade Centre, squared the Pentagon and engendered a generalised feeling of risk (that was then heightened for Australians by the Bali bombings in 2002). Given those developments, Tasmania’s islandness and peripheral location were thought to make it “the only relatively safe haven in an often savage era of economic and cultural globalisation” (Bacon, 2001b: 40). Sue Neales (2005: 30) informed readers of the *Australian Financial Review Magazine* that current tourist numbers to the island were around 750,000 per year, injecting “\$1.1 billion in the State annually”. Unemployment levels, traditionally the highest in Australia, had begun to fall in the early years of the twenty-first century, and by June 2008 reached a historic low of 4.2 per cent (the last time levels were this low was in 1978 when equivalent measurements began), the same as the Australian average (ABS, 2009). Through the 1990s successive State Governments had slowly whittled away at the island’s debt problem (Rae, 2002a), and it was projected that the Tasmanian Government would be debt free by 2007 (Neales, 2005). Austerity measures had resulted in additional money for Government projects, enabled a state tax structure competitive with mainland Australian states, and engendered a newfound economic and investor confidence in Tasmania. In 2001 the island’s renewed economic standing was reflected in the international credit rating agency Standard and Poor’s upgrading of Tasmania’s credit rating to ‘AA’, the first ever upgrade for Tasmania. The justification Standard and Poor’s (cited in Treasury Tasmania, 2001: n.p.) gave for the upgrade was that “the deficits of the late 1980s and early 1990s have been eliminated, with particular improvement in the last few years, and the budget is now

in surplus and set to stay there". In July 2003, another credit rating agency, Moody's, announced their first credit upgrade of the State from 'AA1' to 'AA2' following a review of the 2003-2004 Tasmanian budget (Treasury Tasmania, 2003). However, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry remained perennially concerned about the 'Green disease': "the syndrome ... that when anything successful in business looks like happening, it is attacked as being anti-Tasmanian by the Greens and others" (Thomas, cited in Neales, 2005: 31).

It was in the midst of such transformations of the State – popularly referred to by the Bacon Government as a 'New Tasmania' (echoing British Labour's 'New Britannia') – that the controversy over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of the State Government's flagship cultural festival broke. When the announcement of Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship was made, and as the row quickly escalated, I decided that the contretemps was directly relevant to my inquiry of islandness and that I should follow its development. The research protocol I adopted, outlined below, is derived from my engagement with the first festival and built up from the knowledge of the key features of the event I had obtained by participating in the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island*.

From the time when the controversy began in April 2002, until some months after the end of the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*, I conducted 22 face-to-face and in-depth interviews with some of the central players in the controversy, including festival organisers and Board members, State and Commonwealth Government politicians, protesting artists, corporate sponsors, arts administrators and other governmental agency representatives, including those from tourism and forestry. Research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards proscribed by the University of Tasmania's Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics approval code: H6147). The sampling method was initially purposive, with participants identified on the basis that they contributed to the controversy as it developed, often identifying themselves through public utterances and statements. Snowball sampling was subsequently used, with participants often nominating others they thought relevant to the study. I wrote emails and sent letters to potential participants outlining in an 'Information Sheet' the nature of the research, what their involvement might be, and detailing the broad focus and open-ended, discursive nature of the semi-structured

interviews (Appendix 1). No participant refused the invitation to be involved in the research (although the Premier replied by letter rather than interview and Richard Flanagan agreed to an informal discussion in a pub).

As well as asking participants about the *Ten Days on the Island* festival and what they thought of the Forestry Tasmania sponsorship, I elicited their thoughts about Tasmania as an 'island' and their experiences of other islands. Participants responded in terms of their 'role' or 'position' within the organisations they were part of, although one feature of the research was the extent to which the personal lives of participants were deeply enmeshed within their professional capacities. Where participants sought clarification on their 'speaking positions' in terms of distinctions they drew between their professional roles and a personal viewpoint, or between different professional roles, all perspectives were engaged with. Out of the sample of 22 participants, seven were not willing to be publically identified with their contributions. Their anonymity has been protected by de-identifying these participants through removing their name and their particular organisational positions from this thesis. Where interview material has been used from de-identified participants, the relevant organisations they represented are indicated.

Interviews were conducted in settings nominated by participants, including family homes, business offices, government department meeting rooms, local cafes, and political party rooms. At the request of a small number of participants some interviews took place in Hobart at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania. While the vast majority of interviews lasted between one and two hours, some involved several hours and some required multiple interview sessions spread over a number of days.

Face-to-face interviews were recorded and I also took brief notes. In all except one instance (were two people from the same organisation were interviewed together),¹¹⁹ interviews were with individuals. Participants were enthusiastic about the nature of the research, generous with their time, and keen to participate. They were open and candid in their

¹¹⁹ The one interview that took place with two participants is not reflected in Table 6.1 (p. 256-258) as it would potentially lead to the identification of the participants concerned. Instead I have presented their interviews as separate and removed the specific dates for when all interviews were conducted.

responses to questions; on only a few occasions did participants appear uncomfortable of the questions asked or unsure of what was being asked. On those occasions they requested clarification of the question, and a hand-full of times they requested the tape recorder be turned off so they could provides some insight into an issue they did not want recorded.

Tape recordings of interviews and recordings of public events were listened to and then transcribed by me over a number of months in discrete 'bursts' – I would often return to listen to the recording in order to revisit the context of a particular point – and progressively complete transcriptions were obtained. Overall, an enormous amount of primary research material was generated (over 500,000 words of interview transcriptions). During transcription, participant idioms, including pauses, hesitations, 'ums', 'ers', repetitions and incomplete sentences were also transcribed. These have been largely eliminated from the quotes that appear in this thesis on the grounds that they get in the way of the point the participant was communicating. If it seemed relevant that those features of the response were vital to the point or argument being expressed, they have been retained. Obviously, a vast deal of 'information' is necessarily 'inflected' in the movement of material from one place to another (Latour, 1995), but I have sought to retain fidelity to the original meaning of participants' statements by analysing them in the context of the interview as a whole.

Research material, including interviews, recordings of public events, notes and public documents, was analysed in four main ways. First, I scanned the research data looking for dominant phrases and terms (such as 'island' and 'community') in an initial analysis of raw interview content that was both structured by what I was looking for, while also remaining open to what I might actually find. Secondly, I looked for instances where participants had articulated relatively regular patterns or *themes* (for example, 'islandness', the significance of a cultural festival to Tasmania, and 'parochialism'), both *within* and *across* participants' responses to generic questions. As part of a thematic analysis I reorganised interview material and other research information into discrete themes that seemed pertinent to the festival, which allowed me to identify points of intersection and tensions both within and between interviews. I also focussed on responses that linked Tasmania and Tasmanians together in particular ways, especially insofar as they returned back to the contours of the

Tasmanian problem and arguments about the relevance of islandness to the State. Third, I tracked *arguments* and *justifications* (Boltanski and Thévenot, [1991] 2006) made within a single interview (for example, how festival organisers understood their engagement with Tasmanian communities in staging a decentralised festival, or how sponsors understood their support for the arts). Fourth, I sought to identify the sources of respondent's *interests* and *concerns* in the issues they raised (for example, why were some Tasmanian artists so opposed to Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship) that would allow me to construct a detailed picture of the trajectory of particular positions within the unfolding controversy. Overall, I sought to understand interview data in the terms used by participants and to take what they said at face value while also following the links and associations that participants were making. This synthesis allowed me to build up a dense network of research material that would situate the narratives of participants within their participation of events.

John Law (2004b: 4) has noted that "the problem [with 'social science methods'] is not so much lack of variety in the *practice* of method, as the hegemonic and dominatory pretensions of certain versions or *accounts* of method". I have not sought any specifically methodological guarantees for the knowledge produced in this thesis, rather, as I noted in Chapter 5, my path through the festival and the controversy it later generated, has been "slow and uncertain" (Law, 2004b: 10), built up from a persistent ambivalence about just how to make sense of the festival's rich and 'messy' enactment of Tasmania and Tasmanians. As such, I draw upon traditions of qualitative research in human geography and science studies that attempt to engage productively with the world through eclectic research methods, the ability to be flexible when following the moves of key research subjects/objects, and the 'crystallisation' (Janesik, 2003) of themes, issues and matters of concern between and across different research materials.

Living in Tasmania also gave me opportunity to talk informally to many people who had attended festival events. I did not conduct a statistically-representative quantitative analysis of audience response as my research was focussed on understanding the justifications that the central players in the controversy gave for their actions. Hence, I searched for and collected relevant media articles, ephemera and secondary commentaries, and recorded and then transcribed a number of public events that were pertinent to the

controversy. I also searched out relevant academic literatures (such as the burgeoning ‘festivals’ literature in geography and tourism studies). My participant observer/ethnographic experience of the 2001 festival meant that I had already collected a large amount of research material and was broadly familiar with the workings of *Ten Days on the Island*. In addition to publicly available records (included in the reference list), Table 6.1 details the field data generated for analysis while researching the 2001 and 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*, from the official program launch at the Launceston Inveresk Railyards in early December 2000, to a conversation, in which I was myself a research participant, with arts consultant Anthony Steel in April 2004.

Table 6-1 Summary of primary material generated for analysis of the 2001 and 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* (TDOTI)

Rec = Recording of public event
Int = Face-to-face interview

Not = Notes taken during conversation or at a public event
Pers = Personal correspondence

Code	Participants	Roles and organisations	Information type	Date
Rec001	Robyn Archer	Artistic Director, TDOTI	Transcript of recording: TDOTI 2001 program launch at Inveresk Railyards, Launceston	December 2000
Rec002	Robyn Archer	Artistic Director, TDOTI	Transcript of recording: interview by Tony Delroy, <i>Nightlife</i> ABC Radio	March 2001
Not001	Kristen Molhuysen	Administration Manager, TDOTI	Notes: informal ‘face-to-face’ conversation	March 2001
Not002	Robyn Archer	Artistic Director, TDOTI	Notes: telephone interview	March 2001
Rec003	Sarah Day Jamie Kirkpatrick Margaret Scott	Poet; environmental activist Academic, UTAS Poet and writer	Transcript of recording: ‘Whose Island is it?’ Environmental protest at Parliament House Lawns, Hobart	March 2001
Rec004	Jim Bacon Henry Reynolds	Premier of Tasmania; Minister for the Arts; Chair, TDOTI Chair, Tasmania Pacific Region Prize	Transcript of recording: awarding of Tasmania Pacific Region Prize at T42’ Restaurant, Hobart	April 2001
Not003	Daryl Peebles Stella Kent Justin Lewis Helga Arnalds John Breen	Executive Officer, TDOTI Writer, <i>Our Path</i> Director, <i>Krishnan’s Dairy</i> Performer, <i>Leif the Lucky One</i> Director, <i>Alone It Stands</i>	Notes: ‘Play Talk’ at the Peacock Theatre, Salamanca Place	April 2001
Not004	Justin Lewis	Director, <i>Krishnan’s Dairy</i>	Notes: informal conversation	April 2001
Rec005	Terry Dwyer Helga Arnalds	Director, Menzies Centre for Population and Health Research Performer, <i>Leif the Lucky One</i>	Transcript of recording: ‘Science Talk’ at Antarctic Adventure, Salamanca Square	April 2001
Rec006	Jim Bacon	Premier of Tasmania; Minister for the Arts; Chair, TDOTI	Transcript of recording: <i>The Music Show</i> at the Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre, Salamanca Place	April 2001
Not005	Charlie Chan Annie Greig	Composer, TasDance Artistic Director, TasDance	Notes: ‘Meet the Composers’ at Temple Place, Hobart	April 2001

Code	Participants	Roles and organisations	Information type	Date
Rec007	Robyn Archer Jim Bacon	Artistic Director, TDOTI; Premier of Tasmania; Minister for the Arts; Chair, TDOTI	Transcript of recording: 'Island Talk' at Machine Cafe Salamanca Square	April 2001
Rec008	Nicola Goc Peter Pierce Justice Pierre Slicer	Academic, UTAS Professor of Australian Literature, James Cook University Supreme Court Judge, Tasmania	Transcript of recording: 'Law and Islands' at Fullers Bookshop, Hobart	April 2001
Not006	Peter Adams	Sculptor; host of <i>Sculpture by the Sea</i> ; Member, Artists for Forests	Notes: telephone interview	June 2002
Int001	Sarah Day	Member, Artists for Forests; poet	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	June 2002
Int002	Heather Rose	Spokesperson, Artists for Forests; novelist	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	June 2002
Int003	Withheld	Organiser, TDOTI	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	April 2003
Int004	Malcolm Wells	Deputy CEO, Tourism Tasmania; Board Member, MCFT (1998)	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Tourism Tasmania office, Hobart	August 2003
Int005	Withheld	Representative, Tourism Tasmania	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	August 2003
Int006	Withheld	Board Member, TDOTI	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	August 2003
Int007	Withheld	Organiser, TDOTI	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	August 2003
Int008	Robert Heazlewood	Executive Director, Brand Tasmania Council	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at UTAS, Hobart	August 2003
Int009	Withheld	Representative, Arts Tasmania	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	August 2003
Int010	Duncan Kerr	Federal Member for Denison, Australian Labor Party	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Duncan Kerr's office, Hobart	September 2003
Int011	Withheld	Representative, Forestry Tasmania	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview	September 2003
Int012	Warren Boyles	Editor, <i>40° South Magazine</i>	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at 40° South office, Lindisfarne	September 2003
Rec009	Tim Cox Pete Hay Henry Reynolds Fran Bladel	Radio presenter and journalist, ABC Academic, UTAS Academic, UTAS Retired (2002) Tasmanian MHA, Labor Party	Transcript of recording: 'John Lees Forum: A Sense of Place – on Being Tasmanian' at UTAS, Hobart	September 2003
Int013	Withheld	Policy Adviser, Department of Premier and Cabinet	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at UTAS, Hobart	October 2003
Int014	Dagmar Nordberg	Organiser, 'Future Perfect'	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at UTAS, Hobart	October 2003
Int015	Christine Milne	Adviser to Australian Green's Senator Bob Brown; ex-Leader of The Tasmanian Greens	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at The Australian Greens office, Marine Board Building, Hobart	October 2003
Int016	Gerard Castles	Organiser, 'Future Perfect'	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Mount Stuart residence, Hobart	October 2003
Int017	Rob Woolley	Managing Director, Webster Group Ltd.	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Websters Ltd. office, Hobart	October 2003
Int018	Lyndon Adams	Director of Sales and Marketing, J.Boag & Son; Board Member, Brand Tasmania Council	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at J.Boag & Son office, Hobart	October 2003
Int019	Tony Stacey	Chair, Brand Tasmania Council; Board Member, MCFT	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview UTAS, Hobart	October 2003

Code	Participants	Roles and organisations	Information type	Date
Pers001	Jim Bacon	Premier of Tasmania; Minister for the Arts; Chair, TDOTI	Written letter responding to request for an interview	October 2003
Int020	Dick Bett	Commercial art gallery owner, Bett Gallery; Organiser, 'Future Perfect'; Board Member, Cultural Industry Council	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Bett Gallery, North Hobart	October 2003
Int021	Peg Putt	State Member for Denison, The Tasmanian Greens	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Tasmanian Greens office, Hobart	November 2003
Int022	Bob Brown	Federal Senator for Denison, Leader of The Australian Greens	Transcript of 'face-to-face' interview at Australian Greens office, Hobart	November 2003
Rec010	Sir Guy Green Tim Cox	Chair, TDOTI Radio presenter and journalist, ABC	Transcript of recording: interview conducted by Tim Cox, The Morning Program ABC Radio	November 2003
	Heather Rose	Spokesperson, Artists for Forests		
Not007	Anthony Steel	Arts consultant, consultant to the <i>MCFT/Steel Report</i>	Notes: informal 'face-to-face' conversation, Hadley's Hotel, Hobart	April 2004

Similar to my approach to the 2001 festival, I attended a number of *Ten Days on the Island* events in 2003, as well as those of the alternative festival/exhibition, Future Perfect. Because I had situated myself amongst the various performances of the initial festival through participant observation and ethnographic description, I quickly came to understand and conceptualise the controversy as itself a dramaturgical performance – a melodrama – within the theatre of Tasmania's social and political life (Duffy, 2000; Goffman, 1959; Hajer, 2005). Easily-recognised voices from an established cast of prominent Tasmanian characters, declaimed their various Tasmania's and Tasmanians, from the stage provided by the festival, often speaking across (rather than to) one another. Characters, such as *Ten Days on the Island* Advisor to the Program, Robyn Archer, and Executive Producer, Elizabeth Walsh, were relatively new to the "endless and thick conversations" (Int002) that typify Tasmania's 'politics of personality'. They were thrust upon an unfamiliar stage, often appearing disoriented or displaced amongst props that were all too well-known to the other protagonists – and not unreasonably so. While new props, such as the arts festival itself, were introduced, often enough the most resonant dramaturgical devices were the various lineages of Tasmania's geo-history, a complex multiplicity of biographies, places, interests and agendas.

In the following account of the controversy that erupted over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship I have, in places, included extensive quotes from the central players. I have used these quotes in order to highlight the impact of those voices in the public debate,

while seeking to avoid the ventriloquism that often attends the interpretation of such evidence. The *dramatis personæ* mobilise orderings of place and people in their articulations of ‘Tasmania’ and ‘Tasmanians’, and the means for enacting collectivity are inflected through the justifications advanced by the protagonists for the positions they took, becoming central to the way the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* unfolded.

(2) The controversy over *Forestry Tasmania’s* sponsorship

Prelude: Warnings in the 2001 festival

Retrospective analysis demonstrates that links between the Tasmanian forestry industry and *Ten Days on the Island* were forged in the inaugural festival discussed in Chapter 5. In 2001, Forestry Tasmania¹²⁰ had given \$5,000 to the East Coast Regional Development Organisation, which, in conjunction with Tasmanian experimental theatre company IHOS, produced *Sea Chant*, a community opera that told the story of a fishing, forestry and tourism community at Triabunna, a small town on the east coast of Tasmania. In Chapter 5, I made reference to one point during that performance when a logging truck loaded with logs and emblazoned with the word ‘HOPE’, took centre stage (Figure 5-15).

Additionally, in 2001 Forestry Tasmania had hosted in its Hobart head office an exhibition and demonstration of female indigenous ‘islander’ weaving techniques, called *Island to Island*, and was directly associated with another exhibition, *One Tree* (Figure 6-2).

¹²⁰ In 2003 Forestry Tasmania employed approximately 550 direct staff and 450 contractors and supplied about 60 per cent of the total wood sourced from Tasmania, the rest coming from non-State sources (Int011). A representative from Forestry Tasmania (Int011) contended that in 2003 “the forestry sector contributes about 22 per cent of total gross State product ... that’s about 1.3 billion dollars per annum in the Tasmanian economy”.



Figure 6-2 The One Tree Project
(One Tree, 2001: [1])

Displayed in the Bond Store of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, *One Tree* featured art and craft made from a single stringybark tree (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), a prominent source of timber colloquially known as 'Tasmanian oak'. More than thirty Tasmanian artists, designers and craftspeople had fashioned a variety of art works (furniture, baskets,

puppets, bowls, giant mock potato 'chips') from the roots, bark, trunk, branches and leaves of a tree marked for wood chipping. While the value of the tree as woodchips was small (\$100), the art works were auctioned on-line for thousands of dollars "to raise money for the purchase of forest for sustainable management" (Murray, 2001: 5). Attended on opening night by an initially reluctant Senator Bob Brown, national leader of the Australian Greens, and opened by Archer, the exhibition highlighted issues of the environmental sustainability, social equity and resource value of Tasmanian forests. Bob Brown (Int022) believed that "Forestry Tasmania tried very hard to turn that into a pro-forestry thing", but because of the exhibition's environmental message – that the transformation of forests into bulk commodity woodchips returned a fraction of the possible value of those forests – Forestry Tasmania's desire for the art exhibition to broaden and soften their public image "rebounded, and in fact the reverse occurred" (Int022).

Forestry Tasmania was not the only supporter of the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island* that was in the business of growing, cutting down and processing trees, or of harvesting old growth timbers. North Forest Products,¹²¹ a collection of companies involved in forest plantation businesses in Tasmania (including running two paper mills in the north of the island) had provided cash assistance to *Sea Chant*. Gunns Limited was also a sponsor, a privately-owned forestry company that dominates the forestry industry in Tasmania, and is the world's largest hardwood woodchip exporter. Gunns was listed as a major sponsor, its logo appearing on the 2001 festival program brochure and on individual event brochures that accompanied specific shows – particularly front-running international performances such as *Alone It Stands*, *D'Gary*, *Ballads* and *The Water Carriers*.

Apart from the direct involvement in the 2001 festival of these public and private forestry organisations, forestry was visible in several ways during the first *Ten Days on the Island*. That austral autumn, some festival audiences were witness to smoke drift and ash fall from forestry regeneration burns, which Tasmanian Greens politician Nick McKim (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002c: n.p.) later described ironically as an "atmospheric mushroom cloud installation displayed to great effect by Forestry Tasmania" (Figure 6-3).

¹²¹ The parent company of North Forest Products, Rio Tinto, sold the business to Tasmanian-based Gunns Limited in 2001.



Figure 6-3 Smoke column from forestry regeneration burn
Photo: Matthew Newton (2008)

Smoke columns and clouds gave some tourists cause to question the State's claim to the cleanest air in the world (Int021). More pointedly, a large environmental rally and march, 'Tasmania, Whose Island?', was organised to coincide with the opening day of the festival and capture attention from the media spotlight focussed on Tasmania (Figure 6-4).



Figure 6-4 Environmental protest sign: 'Rally & March: Tasmania, Whose Island?'
Photo: Andrew Harwood (2001)

According to various reports, somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 people attended the Parliament House Lawn's protest, making it one of the largest in Tasmania since the days of the 'No Dams' rallies of the early 1980s. Protestors linked their concerns about forestry practices with the arts in general and *Ten Days on the Island* in particular by voicing opposition to 'Southwood', an integrated timber processing plant whose key and controversial component was the facility to burn wood 'wastes' to generate electricity.

Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, a leading scientific authority on Tasmanian vegetation, was the first to take the stage to speak out against Tasmanian Government forestry practices. In criticising the Southwood proposal, he identified signs indicative of a broader situation in Tasmanian society. Southwood he denounced as a "symptom of an outdated way of looking at a vision for the State through industrial development as opposed to culture, people and the retention of nature" (Rec003). Kirkpatrick suggested that the two competing, polarised and incompatible visions for the island he perceived were embodied by art works in the foyers of two Hobart buildings:

the Lands Department building, the ugliest building, possibly, in Hobart, with an entrance that has these faded Dombrovskis photographs ... [In contrast] you go up to Melville Street, to the Forestry Tasmania headquarters, and there is this absolutely beautiful foyer full of lovely plants, nice sculptures, and they are having a weaving exhibition [*Island to Island*] there at the moment. And you sort of wonder if don't they feel slightly guilty that they are destroying the fair qualities of our landscape and compensating by promoting the arts in their own buildings and their own activities.

And I suspect that *Ten Days on the Island* may be a bit like this. I commend Jim Bacon for his cultivation of the arts, but this cultivation of the arts may conceal the fact that when you drive around the Tasmanian countryside outside of the 40 per cent [that is protected], what do you see when you fly over? You see one of the biggest messes that you will see anywhere in Australia. The 'brown and dirty' states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, you fly over those and the landscape looks relatively harmonious. You fly over eastern Tasmania, northern Tasmania and especially down the Huon [Valley south of Hobart], and it looks like some deranged person sitting in a bulldozer, wielding a giant chainsaw, has been through the landscape just two days before. It is just absolutely appalling.

[Crowd applause and cheering]

Kirkpatrick went on to say that unless land clearing in Tasmania was stopped “we are going to be the laughing stock of Australia”. Being the laughing stock of the mainland certainly went against key objective of the island festival: raising the self-esteem of Tasmanians and engendering pride in the State’s achievements.

Another speaker, Margaret Scott, academic, poet, writer and national television personality, also claimed that the island’s forestry practices were in danger of fixing Tasmanians in the sort of demeaning situation from which cultural events, such as *Ten Days on the Island*, had only recently begun to retrieve them. Scott (Rec003) began by saying how important she thought the festival was for Tasmania.

I’ve just come from part of *Ten Days on the Island*, and I have to say that this is a great festival, something very special. And I think that we have to commend the Government for supporting it, we have to commend Jim Bacon for the way in which he has supported the arts in this State.

[Polite/unsure applause]

Jim has a vision of Tasmania as the Ireland of the ‘Southern Seas’, and I think that it is a very fine vision. But it does not accord with what is happening in our forests.

[Applause]

People I have met here today from all the states in Australia and many overseas countries are ready to accept a new image of this island. For a long time we have been seen as stupid, two-headed, backward, out of touch with the modern world, and all that stuff. I am sure you have to put up with the Tasmanian jokes every time you cross Bass Strait. If you walk onto a platform in Sydney and you say you are from Tasmania, they fall about laughing.

[Laughter]

But that is changing, and it is changing because we are coming over as ‘clean and green’, as a place where there are people with great ideas, as a place with wonderful painters, writers, and artists of all kinds. A place that can mount a festival like *Ten Days*

on the Island. But then, we have this ridiculous policy, this red-necked, old-Labor, backward-looking ...

[Applause]

This policy which belongs to the days of 'electric Eric'¹²² [crowd laughter] when everybody felt they had to attack the wilderness and the pioneer had to go out there and chop down and shoot everything in sight. Those days are gone.

[Applause]

It is a new world and this is an island with a new image, it has a new place in the world. It could well become a destination for cultural tourists; it could thrive on its arts, its intelligence, its beauty, its clean green environment, its wonderful food, all those things. And they supply jobs.

Tasmanian poet Sarah Day then came forward to read an open letter to the Premier of Tasmania, Minister for the Arts, and Chair of *Ten Days on the Island*, Jim Bacon.¹²³ This letter, which was published in the following day's newspaper, expressed "dismay at the continued practice of logging old-growth forests in Tasmania" (Rec003). While applauding the Premier for showing "vision with its recognition that culture can be an important basis for the development of our economy in the future, and courage on such issues as genetically-modified crops" the letter lamented the woodchipping of old growth forest logs as "a sorry and shameful situation in the year 2001 for an island which promotes itself as a centre of ecotourism, as globally different and which is seeking to distinguish itself internationally as being clean, clever and cultured" (Rec003).

Thus, issues of forestry and the arts, governance and the way forward for Tasmania's future, were front and centre during the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island* festival. They

¹²² 'Electric Eric' was the nickname given to Eric Reece, Labor Premier of Tasmania (1958-1969). Reece was a champion of 'hydro-industrialisation', the idea that Tasmanian modernity could be driven by providing cheap hydro-electric power to attract industry. The 2001 festival had already referenced this theme in an exhibition called *Electric Islands: Art Deco in Tasmania*: "Through Hydro industrialisation, Tasmanian governments attempted to jump-start the sleepy island into the age of modernism. Tasmanians sought to redefine themselves, creating some of Australia's finest Art Deco buildings" (TDOTI, 2001a: 33).

¹²³ After writing this letter Sarah Day (Int001) rang as "many prominent artists, musicians, visual artists and writers, anyone associated with the arts I could think of" to see if they would sign her letter. Only one refused. Day sent a version of this letter to the Premier in the weeks leading up to the 2001 festival.

were within the festival officially and unofficially. Indeed, it was evident that some Tasmanian artists felt personally compromised and deeply ambivalent about their participation in a festival in which there was no apparent separation between the festival's status as an autonomous arts institution and its involvement in practices of governance. According to Tasmanian Greens leader and Member of Parliament, Peg Putt (Int021), the message that artists sent during the first festival was "that the festival celebrates a direction which Forestry Tasmania is pulling against".

On the final day of the 2001 festival, during a public conversation ('Island Talk') with the Festival's Artistic Director, Premier Bacon maintained that he thought the debate outlined above about Tasmania's future was a healthy and welcome aspect of Tasmanian social and political life engendered by the festival. He took the opportunity to respond to the letter written to him by artists:

I would really likely to see *Ten Days on the Island* develop around it a huge community debate about lots of questions to do with islands. And, I think it is pretty well known, that there was a public letter written to me not so long ago—at the start of the festival—it might be as good a time as any to say something in response to that. For a start, I hope that no one thought I was so naïve as to get all these creative, articulate people together and not have a wide variety of views put forward. And I think that is one of the tremendous things about the festival...

And in relation to that letter, I mean I am not trying to be provocative, but there are a number of issues facing the Tasmanian community and people have their views about what the priorities are, what's most important. I for one would have thought that if a statement was going to be made to take advantage of the publicity and the attention on the festival, [then I am not surprised] that the environment was raised. But for goodness sake, what about reconciliation with the indigenous people of Tasmania? You know, we started the festival at Risdon [Cove] on Aboriginal land. The fact is that this island has had a cultural life for over 10,000 years. And yet, as many of you know we have run into a few difficulties with advancing the way that we believe it is necessary, and I believe has the support of the Tasmanian people, [to reconcile with Aboriginal Tasmanians] ... But let's use the festival as a positive force to bring us together, and help

us look to a more positive future, because, gee, it looks wonderful to me out there (Rec007).

The Premier, in effect, trumped the cultural credentials of artists who had added their signatures to the letter by invoking the preceding 10,000 years of Palawa Aboriginal culture. But his use of indigenous culture perhaps sat too closely with Kirkpatrick's unforgettable image of Forestry Tasmania's 'deceptive' foyer; a green, clean and indigenous cover for 'destruction'. In declaring that he would continue to "really encourage debate about islands and where we go in the future", Bacon (Rec007) maintained that debates over resource use were intensified by island life:

The people on islands have a particularly special relationship with the land and the sea: the land because we are aware of the limits of the land on which we stand ... But we also have a very special relationship with the sea, it is our lifeblood in lots of ways, we have our recreation on the sea, we work at sea, we are fed from the sea, we look at the sea all the time. And, so it is not surprising that issues about land management and land use and the environment are so important to island communities.

But if I were to make a response to that letter, I'd welcome the letter; I think that it is a perfectly legitimate expression of opinion. But, I would just ask people to look at the fact that Tasmania is in transition ... Tasmania is a very different place to what it was 20 years ago. I have no doubt that it will be a very different place in 20 years time. But it is by concentrating on the things that are uniquely Tasmanian, if you like, characteristics that are unique to our island community, some of them we have in common with other island communities, other we don't ... that we can find a much better collective view of where we are going into the future.

In the Premier's view, then, the social condition of islandness intensifies and amplifies political debates, while the environmental reality of being an island establishes the conditions for a collective social vision harnessed to natural resources. He was troubled by a distinction between debate in the abstract – the idea that the festival *could* be used instrumentally by those who want "to advance particular arguments" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001b: n.p.) – and the specific debate that the festival *had* engendered – the

island's forestry practices: "I do not agree with the views that were put by those writers and artists who sent the open letter to me" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2001b: n.p.).

Moreover, in private, the Premier seethed at what he took as a personal betrayal by the arts sector he had courted and fought for in government (Int013). In response to a direct question about the letter from artists, the Premier again highlighted that islands were for him a binding force: externally by forging links and relations with islands of the world, and internally by inviting Tasmanians to overcome their archipelagic regionalism and divisiveness, and come together around a collective islander identity. In particular, Tasmania's islandness was a resource, conferring upon it a 'point of difference' and uniqueness that would attract attention in an increasingly crowded and homogeneous world. According to the Premier "so much of the world is looking more and more the same and so much of the culture is more and more the same. But everything that we [Tasmanians] can point to, that is unique; and the whole thing about islands is a very powerful image and message" (Rec007).

The Artistic Director took a different tack in responding to criticism of links between forestry and the festival. Drawing upon her history as an 'arts activist', Archer questioned the effectiveness of the strategy pursued by the protestors. She first argued that the artists who had protested had overestimated the power of the arts in effecting political change:

I was actually flattered that the letter [to Premier Bacon] went in to coincide with the cultural festival, since they would have got enormously more publicity if they had coincided with the National Swimming Championships [loud laughter from Jim Bacon] ... But, you know, if I had been politically activated in that way, I probably would have chosen a different moment (Rec007).

Without precisely saying so, Archer seems to be accusing the protestors of piggy-backing on the festival: a protest by artists at a sports event would have been given short shrift and attracted no media coverage. She thus swept aside their request that some heed should be paid to the links artists drew among their arts practices, concerns about the Tasmanian environment, and ambivalence about the new-found governmental 'support' of Tasmanian artists, as represented by *Ten Days on the Island*. Having presented the protesters as

opportunistic, Archer advanced an argument for the power of art to bring about the kind of social, economic and political changes the protesters were asking for:

I was talking to the people from Lillydale [a small town in north-east Tasmania where forestry issues are central]. And I was quoting to them the example ... of the *Theft of Seta*, which was a work that I started commissioning about five years ago ... about the theft of beauty, and they chose an environmental subject – to use an example – the damming of certain water-ways in Bali to create white-water rafting for tourists, which then meant that the farmers around there couldn't grow rice anymore. And they took those kinds of subjects and they did a show which sold out in Adelaide, sold out in Melbourne, won the critics award for the best show in the Melbourne Festival ... They're going to the Sydney Opera House this year, New York in October, followed by a season in London. Now there is a way in which an environmental message has been used as a stimulus for a beautiful work of art. And the message has gone out to hundreds of thousands of people at that same time ...

I have been an activist in my time and I have learnt [Jim Bacon interjecting 'so have I!' followed by laughter] that strategy is all-important ... I think ... the best thing you can do is to create something beautiful, to be constructive in your criticism rather than destructive. And I think that sometimes those ways are infinitely more effective than ... provocative publicity or marching – although I love a good march (Rec007).

With the topic of forestry and political activism threatening to dominate the final day summary of the festival, Archer called on other Tasmanian artists to talk about their involvement with *Ten Days on the Island*. In effect, this tactic questioned the representativeness of those who expressed concerns about the festival. The Artistic Director was, in part, expressing a desire to have arts practices, art works and artists conduct their protests through *Ten Days on the Island*, rather than against the festival (see Waites, 2005). Yet her reliance on differences of opinion among Tasmanian artists raised questions about the ability of *Ten Days on the Island* to achieve the governmental dream of bringing Tasmanians together in the name of islandness.

Act I: Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship

Twelve months before the second, 2003, *Ten Days on the Island*, a small band of four permanent festival organisers, now housed in their own offices, began capitalising on the success of the first with an ambitious 'sponsorship drive'. They chased up the few previous sponsors¹²⁴ and approached many potential new ones who might lend their support in 2003 (Int007).

Funding for the first festival had been overwhelmingly sourced from the State Government. Seventeen per cent came from box-office sales, with corporate sponsorship making up less than four per cent of the total budget (see Table 6.2).

Table 6-2 *Ten Days on the Island* 2001 financial contributions
(TDOTI, 2001b: [7])

<i>Revenue source</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>%</i>
State Government	1,680,206	72.9
Box Office Income	391,447	17.0
Program Income	147,052	6.4
Sponsorship	86,091	3.7
Total Revenue	2,304,796	100
Total Expenditure	2,116,504	

The inaugural festival having succeeded, *Ten Days on the Island* was guaranteed equivalent government funding for the next three iterations in 2003, 2005 and 2007 (Int007) and organisers, including the festival Board, sought to raise an ambitious \$500,000 in corporate sponsorship. In view of organisers' desire to "put artists into natural environments" (Int007), and considering the sorts of infrastructure required to host those events, to avoid damaging these settings, Walsh and Archer approached Evan Rolley, the Managing Director of Forestry Tasmania, to encourage the GBE to support the next *Ten Days on the Island*. According to representatives from Forestry Tasmania, the approach was made because *Ten Days on the Island* was particularly interested in regional tourist infrastructure:

¹²⁴ 2001 festival sponsors were: Hydro Tasmania (the old HEC); Gunns Limited; Alstom (French-based multinational energy company); Duke Energy International; the Tasmanian Government; Orthodontics (a local group of orthodontists); Design Centre of Tasmania (not-for-profit local design organisation); Clemenger BBDO (local offshoot of global advertising and marketing agency); and Win Television (local television station).

projects like our 'Air Walk' at Tahune, the 'Dismal Swamp Maze' and the 'Forest Ecosystem Eco-centre' at Scottsdale, and because the first time round had been very positive and because she [Archer] was asking if we could assist in that way. We said, yeah, we would be happy to help ... continuing on with a set of activities that were taken in the first program, in the first *Ten Days* ...

And quite frankly we believe in the values of it [the festival]. I think the whole idea of having a uniquely Tasmania festival, that celebrates islandness, and does that in a way that engages with rural and regional Tasmania as much as the urban areas is a very important thing. And it just flies in the face of logic to not be supportive of something like that. Particularly as that's where our business is, that's where we, our people, are employed and so on. So, we said yes on that basis (Int011).

Forestry Tasmania offered sponsorship of \$50,000,¹²⁵ made up from in-kind support through their regional tourist infrastructure, and a cash contribution of \$25,000.¹²⁶ This was less than two per cent of the eventual total revenue of the 2003 festival (see Table 6.3), yet Forestry Tasmania's involvement was significant for two reasons. First, the decision of Forestry Tasmania to increase its involvement was a notable coup for Archer and Walsh, given the notorious difficulty fund-raisers have of 'hooking' sponsors for the medium to long-term (Int003). Second, by comparison with the total amount of corporate sponsorship attracted by the first festival (\$86,000), the promise of \$50,000 so early in the drive set an important and much publicised benchmark.

¹²⁵ The amount of Forestry Tasmania sponsorship was not initially released. At the time "a spokesperson for the festival said it made up a 'healthy portion' of the \$500,000 sponsorship budget" (Albert, 2002: 3), leading some to speculate that Forestry Tasmania had originally envisaged a much larger role which was later reduced as criticism of the deal grew. Under pressure to explain the reasoning behind the sponsorship deal, the Minister for Forests Paul Lennon revealed in Parliament on Tuesday 16th April 2002 that it was worth \$50,000 (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002a). When interviewed after the 2003 festival, a representative from Forestry Tasmania accounted for the figure of \$50,000 by saying "a value was attributed to our facility and our provision, and we also made a cash contribution" (Int011), but did not give details of the distribution of support or the amount of cash directed to specific events.

¹²⁶ *Forestry Tasmania's Annual Report 2002-2003* listed a cash contribution of \$25,000 to *Ten Days on the Island*, which was the largest amount paid to any of the 26 events/organisations sponsored by the organisation (Forestry Tasmania, 2003a: 68). By way of comparison, Forestry Tasmania's total cash contribution to the 2001 festival had been \$15,000 (Forestry Tasmania, 2003a: 68).

Table 6-3 *Ten Days on the Island* 2003 financial contributions
(TDOTI, 2003b: [9])

<i>Revenue source</i>	<i>\$</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>% difference</i>
State Government	2,018,537	64.4	- 8.5
Box Office Income	513,509	16.4	- 0.6
Sponsorship and Program Support	575,912	18.4	+ 8.3
Other Income	27,620	0.9	+ 0.9
Total Revenue	3,135,578	100	
Total Expenditure	3,184,298		

As a GBE, Forestry Tasmania is held at arm's-length from, but nevertheless is also governed through, the directives of the Tasmanian Government. Given that its forestry operations had so deeply divided public opinion in the past, it was a surprise to many when, on Friday 12th April 2002, a press release was issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet announcing that Forestry Tasmania would be *the* major sponsor of the 2003 festival (Int003). That this announcement came from the Premier's department, rather than from Forestry Tasmania or *Ten Days on the Island* organisers, perhaps could be explained by the Premier's other roles as Minister for the Arts and Chairman of *Ten Days on the Island*. For many observers, including festival organisers, the announcement that Forestry Tasmania was going to be *the*¹²⁷ major sponsor of the festival, rather than just *one* sponsor or *a* sponsor, was a "fundamental mistake" (Int003). Whatever the intrigue behind the naming of Forestry Tasmania, the news that it was to have significantly increased involvement in the 2003 festival (reported the following day in the media) angered and upset Tasmanian artists ambivalent about the politics of *Ten Days on the Island* and decidedly against forestry practices on the island.

¹²⁷ A number of participants suggested that the naming of Forestry Tasmania as 'the' major sponsor in the original Friday 12th April press release was a "tactical blunder" (Int013). For Federal MHA for Denison, Duncan Kerr, the 'erroneously' used 'the' was a significant reason for the ensuing controversy and, drawing on his extensive political experience Kerr noted that when given a choice of explanations between a "scandal and stuff-up", it was invariably wiser to choose the 'stuff-up' (Int010). Other participants were more inclined to suspect that a scandal of some sort had occurred, although they differed in their estimations of the exact reasons behind the scandal. However, what typically united intimations of a scandal was the suggestion that Forestry Tasmania sponsorship was designed to be politically divisive and to rile. On Monday 15th April 2002, following a weekend of antagonism to the initial announcement, a second press release was issued from the Premier's department. In this press release, Forestry Tasmania shifted from being 'the' major sponsor to being 'a' major sponsor, "not a naming rights sponsor" of the festival (Pos, 2002a: 19).

Act II: Controversy

Scene 1 Initial reactions

Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship deal with *Ten Days on the Island* made front page news in Tasmania on Saturday 13th April 2002. Under the headline 'Spitting chips on art deal', *The Saturday Mercury* reported (Wood, 2002a: 1):

A furious row erupted in the Tasmanian arts world yesterday after Forestry Tasmania was announced as a major sponsor of next year's *Ten Days on the Island* Festival ... Under the deal – which is believed to involve a significant proportion of the *Ten Days*' \$500,000 sponsorship target – Forestry Tasmania's logo will feature on the Festival's advertising and signage.

Reporter, novelist and academic Danielle Wood had contacted key players for reactions to the announcement. Novelist Heather Rose (cited in Wood, 2002a: 1), one of the 46 signatories to the open letter sent to the Premier in 2001, was distraught: "It's the end of the integrity of the Festival". Poet Sarah Day (cited in Wood, 2002a: 1) agreed, intimating that she would inform invited international artists "of the political issues surrounding forestry". Federal Labor politician Duncan Kerr (cited in Wood, 2002a: 2) thought that many Tasmanians would be "heartbroken" by the announcement, commenting that forestry was "an issue that deeply divides our community". Tasmanian academic Pete Hay (cited in Wood, 2002a: 2) wondered if the sponsorship deal "might not be a bloody-minded reaction to the events that took place last Festival. This kind of petty revenge is at the heart of Tasmanian politics", but it is "foolish beyond all words because a very large part of the *Ten Days on the Island* constituency will refuse to have anything to do with it". Geoff Law (cited in Wood, 2002a: 2), Campaign Manager of The Wilderness Society, thought Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship might backfire on the organisation: "The Festival will be held in April, accepting Forestry Tasmania's dirty money as the smoke from regeneration burns hangs overhead".

Responding to such criticism, Forestry Tasmania's Manager of Corporate Affairs, Steve Bavage (cited in Wood, 2002a: 2), pointed out that the organisation had a long history of supporting the arts in Tasmania – especially "regional community projects". Premier Bacon

(cited in Wood, 2002a: 2) expressed his disappointment at the negative reaction from some artists and observed that Forestry Tasmania was merely the first major sponsor to sign up; the festival already had “a wide range of [smaller] sponsors from banks to orthodontists and we would welcome many more”. Archer (cited in Wood, 2002a: 2) took a similar line, underscoring the importance of the festival as a ‘broad church’: “artists who participate in *Ten Days on the Island* have an extremely wide and diverse range of feelings and opinions and we encourage this ... But without a similarly broad base of sponsorship, it is unlikely the event can happen at all”. Some Tasmanian artists welcomed the sponsorship deal. Nicholas Heyward (cited in Wood, 2002a: 1), who had been involved with Archer in the Adelaide Festival of Arts and was now General Manger of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, was optimistic: “I hope *Ten Days* has got a lot of money because we want a fabulous festival”.

Scene 2 Artists for Forests

On the day of the original press release about Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship of the 2003 festival, amidst requests for comments from the media, a number of artists who were “shocked and dismayed and angered by the decision” (Int002) met to discuss the matter. That afternoon they approached Bacon’s office but were turned away. That weekend, as the artists phoned around, communicating their outrage, spoke to the press and reacted to the public statements and emerging media reports, the controversy – like a forestry regeneration fire threatening to escape from its boundaries – grew in scope and intensity. United in rage, the artists differed on what response to take. The sculptor, who had hosted *Sculpture by the Sea* at his property ‘Windgrove’ during the 2001 festival, believed that artists should boycott the 2003 festival:

For me this is a clear-cut case of FT [Forestry Tasmania] trying to buy the silence of artists. They have a knife at our throats saying ‘Take our money or you don’t have a festival’. I for one cannot be complicit in that. Artists need to make a stand that says this arrogance can no longer be tolerated (Adams, cited in Wood, 2002b: 3).

Peter Adams thought the loss of the festival for a few years would be a fair price to pay for the right to hold one’s head high on a matter of principle (Not006). Another Tasmanian

sculptor, Gaye Hawkes (cited in Wood, 2002b: 3), agreed: “I care more about the forests than about exhibiting my art”. Margaret Scott, with a foot in both camps, had a more pragmatic view. Like fellow author, activist and academic, Cassandra Pybus, she found forestry practices abhorrent, but thought that the festival, part-funded by Forestry Tasmania, could lead to an increased exposure of forestry issues and so “force them to face up to international criticism” (Scott, cited in Crawford, 2002a: 23). She opposed a boycott, disagreeing with her friend and neighbour Peter Adams, on the grounds that the festival represented a “crucial moment in Tasmania,” and was too important to lose (cited in Crawford, 2002a: 23).

A group of more than 50 artists met on the evening of April 14th, 2002, to formulate a coordinated and unified approach to the quandary. Heather Rose (Int002), who would become a spokesperson for the coalition of artists known as Artists for Forests, described the solution they arrived at:

We wanted to say ‘Ok, well, we don’t want Forestry Tasmania’s money but clearly we want the festival’ so we need to obviously replace those funds ... And so we devised an ad[vertisement] that would ask the people of Tasmania if they would be willing to pledge [money] conditional upon Forestry Tasmania being removed as a sponsor.

The newly formed coalition also drafted a letter¹²⁸ to the Board of *Ten Days on the Island* signed by 60 artists and purportedly representing “many more ... who wish to remain anonymous” (Day *et al.*, 2002: n.p.):

Our backgrounds, our artistic expression and our political views are diverse but on one issue we are united. While we do not wish to jeopardise the success of the Festival, we cannot support sponsorship by Forestry Tasmania while the clearfelling of old growth forests continues. We would be happy to work with the Board to assist in the finding of alternative sponsors.

¹²⁸ It is unclear exactly when this letter was sent to the Board of *Ten Days on the Island*; it could have been as late as Saturday 20th April 2002. However, by Thursday 18th April, Archer had received, via her agent, a fax from Heather Rose (Archer, 2002a) outlining artist concerns and desire to replace Forestry Tasmania sponsorship money.

Notwithstanding the offer ‘to work with the Board’ to find alternative sponsorship “more in keeping with the aims and visions of the festival”, Rose also told the press that the artists’ coalition was contacting national and international artists, writers and performers “to advise them about what they will be buying into through their involvement” (cited in Paine, 2002a: 5). The statements artists made to the media over the next few days fanned the flames of controversy.

Scene 3 Media bellows fan the flames

Unlike Adams, Rose made no distinction between Forestry Tasmania and the Government when she suggested that the sponsorship deal was designed to silence artist opposition to the island’s forestry industry, settling for an inclusive ‘they’: ‘they’ encompassed the festival organisation itself, given that the Premier was the Chairman of the Board of *Ten Days on the Island*. Michael Denholm (cited in Paine, 2002a: 5), writer and co-founder of Tasmania’s literary *Island Magazine*, observed that *Ten Days on the Island* “is about making Tasmania a more cultured place, a place where intelligence is valued ... But this [sponsorship deal] is a stupid thing to do and it is not helping the State”. *The Mercury* (16th April, 2002: 14) continued to publish letters to the editor on the controversy. R.D. Roos from Roses Tier (in the foothills of Ben Lomond in the north-east), mimicking the festival’s rhetoric of ‘celebration’, asked:

Is Ten Days meant to celebrate the demise of the last old-growth eucalypt forests, together with the formerly plentiful clean water and the purest air in Australia, or is it to celebrate Tasmania’s establishment as Australia’s industrial woodlot? A boycott is appropriate in case of the former and a pall of smoke, hiding the whole island, in the case of the latter.

Buck and Joan Emberg from the tiny town of Golconda – which they described as “the forest destruction zone of Tasmania’s north-east” – had found the first festival ‘wonderful’, but couldn’t envisage attending the next: “What a sham and what a shame. We will encourage as many people as possible to boycott the whole affair ... until it is the festival of and for the people ... not a celebration of the loss of our forest heritage”.

Nick McKim from the commuter suburb of Tinderbox south of Hobart saw the State Government's role in bringing Forestry Tasmania into the festival as an

abysmal mismanagement of Tasmania's brand [threatening] the integrity of the Festival ... [and] Tasmania's future prosperity. Our clean, green reputation will be exposed as a façade, and the millions of dollars we have spent on our brand [will be] revealed on an international stage as mere rhetoric.

In 2002, McKim was a Tasmanian Greens candidate for the forthcoming State election and in three months' time would be elected to parliament, eventually becoming party leader in 2008.¹²⁹ The miraculous resurgence of the Greens at the 2002 election, after their decimation in 1998, was "a once in a half century event" according to Tasmanian political analyst Richard Herr (2003a: 293). Three months out from the election, the Premier (cited in Barbeliuk, 2002a: 3) was painting the dissident artists 'green' – "Greens attempting to impose their own extremists views" on a festival that embraced "the entire community of Tasmania". In the north-west of the island *The Advocate* newspaper reported Bacon (cited in Anon, 2002a: 4) as condemning "green elements" for attempting "to hijack the Festival". Executive Director of *Ten Days on the Island* Elizabeth Walsh (2002: 14) followed Bacon in putting a case for Tasmanian inclusiveness: "this festival now belongs to Tasmanians far and wide ... For one sector of the community to manipulate *Ten Days on the Island* as a vehicle to impose their views on others is disappointing". From the other side, Heather Rose hit back: artists were "from all sorts of political backgrounds", and if the State as a whole were to be canvassed, a recent survey result had found that "70 per cent of Tasmanians are opposed to old-growth logging" (cited in Barbeliuk, 2002a: 3). Evan Rolley said to protest against Forestry Tasmania was to mistake your target, because decisions about forestry practices lay with the State Parliament – it was by that formal governing mechanism that any changes would have to come (Wood, 2002d).

¹²⁹ Forestry issues certainly played a role in the success of the Greens at the 2002 election, and the heat generated around the sponsorship deal struck between *Ten Days on the Island* and Forestry Tasmania, as mediated by the Labor Government, was a factor in raising their number of elected representatives from one to four. However, Green gains were at the expense of Liberal losses (Herr, 2003a), and Labor was returned easily (retaining its 14 seats with its fourth highest vote ever), suggesting that other factors were also in play.

Scene 4 'Cultural fascists'

On 16th April 2002, with the controversy over sponsorship of the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* now making news on mainland Australia,¹³⁰ the Premier exploded in an angry outburst. Responding to a question from Greens' parliamentarian Peg Putt about why he had "courted controversy by naming Forestry Tasmania as a major sponsor", the Premier rejected as "absolutely outrageous" the attempt by a "self-appointed group, whether it's 46, 56 or 16 artists ... to impose their views on the *Ten Days on the Island* festival" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002b: n.p.). He welcomed "the diversity, the debate, the different views that are always put forward around these festivals", but the artists' protest amounted to "political censorship" and the Greens, too, were seeking to "sabotage the festival". Egged on by his deputy Premier and Minister for Forests, Paul Lennon – who interjected "why doesn't The Wilderness Society put up \$50,000"¹³¹ – the Premier challenged protestors to fund the festival themselves. Inflamed by Putt's comment that he was "shooting the messenger", Bacon retorted that his Government and the Board of *Ten Days on the Island* would "not bow to cultural fascists that want to impose their views on everybody else who enjoyed the festival" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002b: n.p.).

The Premier's description of Tasmanian artists as 'cultural fascists' proved a recruiting tool for Artists for Forests. That night, numbers swelled at their meeting in West Hobart. Plans to find replacement funds had been given added impetus by the challenge issued in Parliament, and pledge request advertisements were organised to be placed in Tasmanian newspapers that Saturday.¹³²

The Premier's outburst and reactions to it dominated the next days' media. Martine Haley (2002b: 8-9), chief political journalist for *The Mercury*, had a two-page spread headed

¹³⁰ On 16th April 2002 national newspapers *The Australian* and *The Age* featured stories on the controversy.

¹³¹ As far as I can ascertain, this was the first time a monetary figure was publicly provided of the sponsorship deal, and it seems to have been a slip of the tongue on behalf of the Minister for Forests. Upon the resumption of question time later that morning, under question from Liberal Rene Hidding, Paul Lennon confirmed that amount (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002a).

¹³² The wording of the pledge that appeared in *The Mercury* read: "I pledge \$ _ _ _ in sponsorship of the *Ten Days on the Island* Festival, conditional upon Forestry Tasmania being removed as a sponsor of this Festival. I support the artists and the wider community in calling for the end to clearfelling in our old-growth forests. I UNDERSTAND I NEED SEND NO MONEY NOW. I will be contacted when the Festival Board accept the people of Tasmania's sponsorship of our *Ten Days on the Island*" (Arts for Forests, 2002: 4).

“Bacon slams ‘cultural fascists’” and arts journalist Margaretta Pos (2002a: 19) wrote under the provocative heading “Brilliant concept in for clearfelling”. For Pos, Bacon’s invitation to Forestry Tasmania to be a sponsor had “guaranteed a backlash”. He and the Board of *Ten Days on the Island* had to be blind not to foresee such a response, given the opposition that forestry had raised in the preceding festival, and given that “there is no more significant issue for the State in the long term than forestry practices today. There is no more divisive issue. And the State’s artists, by and large, oppose the Government’s forestry practices and are articulate about it” (Pos, 2002a: 19). In calling artists ‘cultural fascists’ Premier Bacon had “in one foolish moment ... pulled the magic carpet from under the State’s 2003 Festival ... Even the brilliant creative talents of Artistic Director Robyn Archer will be unable to repair the damage, no matter how good the program: this Festival will be a tainted one” (Pos, 2002a: 19).

Danielle Wood reported on another event, the Forestry Tasmania Winter Challenge, an outdoors adventure competition,¹³³ noting that organisers had warned competitors that they would be disqualified for any displays of disrespect to the naming-rights sponsor. Steve Bavage from Forestry Tasmania insisted that the GBE had not requested such conditions. But Wood used the claim to give weight to her report that some Tasmanian artists were intimidated by Bacon’s ‘fiery attack’, fearing reprisals from a Government that had declared itself in direct and open conflict with many Tasmanian artists. Judging from the many strongly-worded opinions published in the press, not all artists were silenced. Author Amanda Lohrey (cited in Wood, 2002c: 9) thought Forestry Tasmania “as bad as a cigarette company”; “artists who participate are implicitly endorsing what they stand for whether they like it or not”; worse, “every piece of art in this festival is now compromised”. Author Richard Flanagan (cited in Haley, 2002b: 8), in the United States to promote his new novel, was adamant: it was “idiotic that the major celebration of our island’s culture is to be sponsored by those responsible for its destruction”. He hoped the Premier would “intervene to stop this sad misjudgement from damaging the Festival any

¹³³ In August 2002 a founding sponsor of the Winter Challenge, Paddy Pallin (an outdoor adventure merchandise company) withdrew its support because of complaints it had received about Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship. According to one complainant and Huon Valley Councillor, Adam Burling (cited in Warner, 2002: 7), “as with *10 Days on the Island*, this is another example of Forestry Tasmania using a community event to try and hide their real practices of destroying Tasmania’s last wild forests”.

further". Meanwhile, "I will accept no invitation to take part and I will urge all fellow writers – local, national and international – to do likewise".

Divisions already evident in the Tasmanian arts community opened wider, with some defending the deal on the grounds of economic pragmatism. Constantine Koukias, founder of IHOS Opera, was "totally against logging in old growth forests, most people are," but did not see why the festival had to be used as a political lever, in view of "the overall cultural need Tasmania has for this festival. It's unique and it will put Tasmania on the map" (cited in Haley, 2002b: 8). The controversy quickly spread beyond divisions within the island's art community to engulf other Tasmanian communities. In letters to the editor of *The Mercury* (17th April, 2002: 19), Rodney Stagg, from the small town of Meander near Deloraine, supported the sponsorship deal, calling artists "elitists". Max Boon from Bagdad, a commuter suburb north of Hobart, pleaded with Forestry Tasmania to stop giving their money to "professional writers and poets"; "give it to the many community groups who really want to promote our town, region and State." Stephanie Cahalan from the Hobart-suburb of Dynnyrne put a different perspective: "please Mr Bacon, don't turn our Festival into a divisive publicity stunt for your ailing government business enterprise [i.e., Forestry Tasmania]." Long-time participant in the Tasmanian arts community, Michael Denholm from Howrah, over the River Derwent from Hobart, thought that, in his multiple roles, Bacon was attempting to "manipulate the arts for his own ends" – and issued a challenge: "to what extent is Robyn Archer prepared to play Mephisto in Bacon's drama?"

Scene 5 Robyn Archer responds

A few days later, the Adviser to the Program broke her "understandabl[e], if uncharacteristic" silence (Pos, 2002a: 19) with a letter to Artists for Forests spokeswoman Heather Rose. As an organisation, *Ten Days on the Island* had not wanted to intervene in the controversy but "in the end ... had to succumb to pressure, because people were about to have nervous breakdowns and didn't know what to do. We had to say something" (Int003). Archer (2002a: n.p.) defended *Ten Days on the Island* on the grounds that it was "as dear to my heart as old trees are to yours". Her colourful way of expressing herself proved highly inflammatory. While she expressed sympathy for concerns about old-growth

logging and supported the right to “freedom of expression and right to protest”, she found “the destructive methods of your means” had “pushed those beliefs into the background for me just now.” Repeating earlier claims, Archer damned the protesters’ “choice of strategic target” as “inappropriate”, and their methods “entirely lost to a mainland audience who, tragically, writes you off with a laugh as a ‘mob of ratbag greenies’” (Archer, 2002a: n.p.).¹³⁴ That proved a divisive framing of islander artists for the central curator of an island festival. She contended that Artists for Forests had “misunderstood the nature of arts sponsorship in a most naïve, and therefore dangerous, way” when they asked for the rejection of Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship and offered to replace the money. Their gesture was naïve because government support for the arts was “always hard fought for against other interests” and dangerous because their protest had induced “extreme nervousness in the other potential sponsors”:

One week ago, we were brilliantly on track to quadruple the corporate sponsorship for this event. That campaign is now in ruins and we fear that we cannot rescue it ... Of course, I hold you and your group wholly responsible for this extreme destabilisation of a still very young and fragile event (Archer, 2002a: n.p.).

Several times in the letter she held the protesting artists responsible for “perhaps fatally ... jeopardis[ing]” *Ten Days on the Island*: “I cannot say strongly enough just how serious and severe this damage is, nor how strongly I insist that you take direct, and named responsibility for this damage”. Artists protesting against the festival but “unwilling to name themselves publicly” were condemned by Archer “as cowardly”. Of the 60 signatories to the letter sent to the festival’s Board, she “recognise[d] two [who were] directly involved” with the 2001 festival, suggesting that she didn’t consider them representative of the festival, and by implication, nor were they representative of Tasmanian culture. More strongly, Archer (2002a: n.p.) divided artists into two: those who could afford to make a stand, and other, community-based artists, who depended for their existence on sponsorship:

¹³⁴ Festival organisers maintained that they had “been so careful not to personalise any of it. We have said nothing personally” (Int003), but slippages in language from admonishing the behaviours of artists to admonishing artists themselves, were never far from the surface. Perhaps Tasmanian artists were also hypersensitive to that extension. The history of linking the ‘Tasmanian problem’ to problematic Tasmanians assisting no less than the sense that there was a long history of ‘shooting the messenger’ in Tasmanian public life.

the vast majority of you [protesters] are either writers or visual Artists – i.e. you practice art forms that can be carried on in isolation, and feel comfortable about sabotaging an event which is of invaluable help to performing artists who have a desperate need in Tasmania for more resources. ... I regard this as extremely selfish.

In Archer's view, for an art organisation to accept as a principle that a sponsor could be refused if "one interest group disagreed with some part of their activities" would bring in "no sponsorship of the arts either for *Ten Days*, or anything else". The artists' failure to think this matter through left them in a "ludicrous, if not purely hypocritical" position, for they themselves were "presumably recipients of government grants and other income". "Forestry Tasmania is a billion dollar industry with 1 in 20 Tasmanians employed in it;¹³⁵ the taxes that come from both company and individuals is the source of your arts funding. You presumably do not refuse these grants" (2002a: n.p.). Archer implied in *The Mercury* a few days later that artists should be willing to accept any legal¹³⁶ sponsorship from "banks, or car manufacturers, or food and drink producers and distributors or alcohol producers or gambling consortia or power and energy companies" (Archer, 2002b: 15), on the basis that all moneys were equally tainted – depending on perspective:

Allow one interest group to dictate terms, then you open the gates for all. The opera director Peter Sellars famously said: 'Money is like sausage meat – it's best not to ask where it came from.' For idealists this is sad but true (Archer, 2002b: 15).

Asserting that "for artists the uppermost is freedom from censorship" (2002b: 15) while also maintaining "an inescapable collusion of art and money" (2002a: n.p.), Archer

¹³⁵ Archer provided no indication where she had sourced these figures. The suggestion that one in 20 Tasmanians were employed by Forestry Tasmania was wildly inaccurate. On that basis, with a population of just fewer than half a million, around 25,000 Tasmanians would work for Forestry Tasmania. According to representatives from Forestry Tasmania, in 2003 the GBE employed approximately 550 direct staff and 450 contractors (Int011), figures which had fallen from those in June 2002, when the organisation directly employed "596 plus more than 900 contractors and suppliers" (Forestry Tasmania, 2002: 1). On a reading that allows for the confusing of an organisation with an industry and Tasmanians for employed Tasmanians, 206,800 at August 2003 (ABS, 2003), the claim that one in 20 employed Tasmanians worked in the forestry industry would result in an industry employing 10,340 people, still 3,000 less than what Forestry Tasmania (2002: 1) claimed were employed in 'forest-based industries'. Needless to say, statements of fact about the numbers employed by forestry in comparison to other industries, such as tourism, are hotly contested in Tasmania.

¹³⁶ The term 'legal' was in response to criticisms from art critic Peter Timms that Archer's position would encompass accepting tobacco sponsorship (illegal in Australia). Timms (2002a: n.p.) had asked "why doesn't the Board approach one of the multinational tobacco giants? Archer's argument is disingenuous. Even she, presumably, would draw the line somewhere".

implored protesting artists to bring their work inside the festival and make their protest there. Recalling the strategic success of the *One Tree* exhibition she had “joyfully opened with Bob Brown” in the inaugural festival, she urged that “the best way to convey your message, as artists, would be in a creative approach” (2002a: n.p.). According to organisers from *Ten Days on the Island*, inclusion of forestry issues “would have been a really interesting debate inside the festival, possibly more interesting inside than outside, certainly more comfortable” (Int003).

Archer’s letter to Artists for Forests concluded by seeking their assurance that they would not “get at the invited guests” (Archer, 2002a: n.p.):

We need you to know that we now demand a written guarantee that you will not harass, physically or morally, or harangue or picket any invited artist, local, national or international. Without this guarantee it will not be possible to invite any artist to participate. Therefore, there will be no *Ten Days on the Island*, at least not with the present team at the helm.

Archer (2002a: n.p.) aptly and insightfully characterised the controversy surrounding Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island* as being conducted in “an atmosphere ... queered by hysteria and old enmities”, though that assessment also seemed exemplified in her own language. She went on to observe that the controversy has returned Tasmania “to the old divided state [where] the community once again [had been forced] into two irreconcilable camps” (2002b: 15).

The letter was not well-received by those to whom it was addressed. Six days later (26th April 2002) it was front page news in *The Mercury*. To Rose, the letter seemed an “intemperate and ill-informed personal attack”, “abhorrent” in its “insinuation that the artists would consider violence”. Archer’s (2002b: 15) comment that the controversy had erupted in “a familiar atmosphere in which entrenched opinions are aired”, led Rose to retort that a deep knowledge of Tasmania was critical to understanding the controversy: “unfortunately it is evident that Ms Archer does not live in Tasmania and is unfamiliar with the nature of the debate over our forest practices that has gone on in Tasmania for over a decade” (cited in Wood, 2002e: 2). Many research participants contended that the

controversy over forestry and the festival represented the latest site for ongoing and simmering tensions:

You have got twenty years of history that precedes what happened with *Ten Days on the Island*, and it's not all obvious to the public, nor will it ever will be ... it's a multifaceted thing that only manifested itself in *Ten Days*. Robyn [Archer] wouldn't know the background to a lot of these issues. The only people who are likely to would be Jim [Bacon], Richard [Flanagan], Evan Rolley and Paul Lennon, the people who have been in this game a long, long time ... there's more than twenty, thirty years of playing in that pond (Int013).

There it seemed that at least one recommendation of the *MCFT/Steel Report* had proved correct: anticipating difficulty in finding a Tasmanian of international reputation for its Artistic Director, they had insisted that the "General Manager, CEO of the Company, should be a Tasmanian broadly familiar with the arts in the State as well as the business, community and political sectors ... A critical component of this role will be the development of a successful strategy for sponsorship" (MCFT/Steel, 1998: 9). But neither the curatorial position nor the role of the person who was imagined to have hands-on experience of the island's "strange and verdant politics" (Hay, 2000: n.p.) had turned out to be Tasmanian.

Scene 6 Ten Days on the Island in danger of collapse?

Within ten days of the Premier's announcement that Forestry Tasmania would be a major sponsor of *Ten Days on the Island* the heat of opposition had spread beyond the issue of forestry. The bitterness, acrimony and distrust that characterised how the debate was conducted spread on multiple fronts and included arguments around censorship and free speech, the influence of corporate sponsors, the morality of relationships between art, business and government, and the standing and autonomy of artists, art practices and art works in Tasmania's social, economic, political and cultural life.

While there was "no evidence that [international] artists or national art bodies ha[d] turned away from the Festival" (Bingham, 2002b: 28), pressure grew around the possibility that the festival would terminally founder on 'forestry' – which many took to be a classic

marker of Tasmanian divisiveness. A solution to the familiar impasse seemed unlikely while the main protagonists continued their standoff, each claiming the other singularly responsible for ‘pushing the festival to the brink’. On the weekend that Archer wrote her “particularly odious and offensive letter” (Flanagan, 2003a: n.p.), the Premier penned an open letter to Tasmanians, maintaining, against some clear evidence to the contrary, that “*10 Days on the Island* unites Tasmanians”, “is a celebration of artistic achievement” and is too important to be damaged by “politics”. Executive Producer Walsh (cited by Bingham, 2002b: 28) regretted the controversy: “It’s a damaging discussion when something like *10 Days* is used as a [political] vehicle”. Rose (cited in Anon, 2002b: 6) responded that the festival had been politicised by its “blatantly provocative arrangement” involving Government and Forestry Tasmania. According to alternate perspectives, Forestry Tasmania, the Government, and artists were all using the festival as a ‘vehicle’. In that sense, the controversy seemed emblematic more generally of an island community drawing on its distinctive characteristics of multiple internal communities to revitalise well-established roles, refurbish a range of arguments and stoke the fires of ongoing antagonisms. The justification for accusations made against each side in the controversy was organised around an unacknowledged agreement that ‘art’ should be free from ‘politics’; though individual accusers were themselves free from such politics.

Scene 7 Compromises and conciliation?

The Mercury (2002a: 18) editorial of 18th April exhorted the protagonists to “stop the name calling” and called for “an act of statesmanship” from Bacon, to intervene to end an unsightly row that was “dividing the community at a time when Tasmanians should be drawn together in a celebration of Tasmanian creativity”. The editorial position was reiterated a week later with a plea, “For art’s sake stop this row now”. *The Mercury* (2002b: 14) proposed a means to “drain the poison”:

There is a way through the impasse. It will take courage, character and compromise on all sides—for there is one thing they all agree on: the value of *10 Days on the Island* to Tasmania and Tasmanians. The solution? That Forestry Tasmania sponsorship be steered specifically to events in regional communities and other participants of the

festival who would welcome it. Compromise and unity must be possible. Tasmanians should expect nothing less from those who say they have their best interests at heart.

This proposal had the backing of the Artists for Forests coalition, and Rose (cited in Wood, 2002f: 3) sought a meeting with the Premier, advising that a “good way for us to go could be for Forestry Tasmania to sponsor events in regional areas, as they have said was their intention, for them to sponsor events in the same way they did last time but not be an overall, umbrella sponsor for the whole event”.

Walsh (cited in Wood, 2002f: 3) acknowledged that “everyone would like to find a solution”. Evan Rolley (cited in de Blas, 2002: n.p.) thought that suggestion was “a matter for the Board of *Ten Days on the Island*”. But the Chair of the Board refused to meet with the artists: “if they are putting a demand on me that I must impose their views on the whole festival, then a meeting is a waste of time because I will not accept that” (Bacon, cited in Wood, 2002f: 3). For the Premier, the only possible solution to the impasse was for the artists to “back down” and “withdraw threats of ... encouraging international artists to boycott” *Ten Days on the Island*. Peter Timms (cited in Wood, 2002f: 3), another spokesperson for the artists’ coalition, said that was a “misrepresentation”; artists “had never and will never advocate a boycott”. His declaration ranged from the technical (some artists, for example Peter Adams, had called for a boycott) to the disingenuous (given that protesting artists said they would not be taking part in the festival and would contact others to inform them why).

As the month of April drew to a close, the amount of money pledged to the Artists for Forests community fund exceeded the \$50,000 promised by Forestry Tasmania. Buoyed by the success of the campaign, the artists’ coalition was now keen to push on in the hope of securing \$150,000, which would, they hoped, secure naming rights for the festival (Barbeliuk, 2002b). In early May, Rose (2002a: 10) felt the artists’ coalition was in a position to make another offer to *Ten Days on the Island*. That offer, too, was rejected, by Bacon and the *Ten Days on the Island* Board. Separate offers by Flanagan and the Lord Mayor of Hobart, Rob Valentine, to mediate in a dispute they “could see was pregnant with catastrophe” (Flanagan, 2003a: n.p.) were dismissed by the Premier (Bacon, cited in Pos,

2002b: 10): “people are offering to act as mediators. They seem to think there is something to mediate – there isn’t”.

Scene 8 Deadlock

The log jam continued over May and June and was now a subject of gossip throughout Australia’s festival communities. In mid-May one of Archer’s mainland colleagues, Marcus Westbury, Manager of Newcastle’s (NSW) This Is Not Art festival, implored her to reconsider the position she had taken. Accepting a sponsor was never purely financial, Westbury wrote, it was “an active endorsement of the business practices of that company and represents very clearly what the festival stands for and wishes to be associated with”: indeed, “if the arts are unable or unwilling to be held to a standard of ethical behaviour, then I am at a loss as to what value the arts hold in our society” (cited in Anon, 2002c: 9). This Is Not Art would never accept sponsorship like that provided by Forestry Tasmania as it “would make such a powerful negative statement”. In words directed to Archer, but applying equally to the festival, the Tasmanian Government and artists, he pleaded that the value of the sponsorship was “small compared to the value of your reputation” (cited in Anon, 2002c: 9).

The festival Board was holding to the Premier’s line. In mid-May Walsh wrote to the artists’ coalition saying that, after consideration, the current sponsorship arrangements would remain (Long, 2002). The Board would be happy to accept sponsorship money from artists, under the conditions that pertain to all sponsors, by which “no sponsor has the right to interfere with the program or to tell another sponsor what to do” (Archer, 2003: 24). Although some protestors hoped that May 31st would prove to be an auspicious date, the Premier’s announcement that day – that the \$40,000 Tasmania Pacific Region Prize was to be joined by two new literary prizes, \$25,000 for non-fiction and \$10,000 for poetry – was not used to heal wounds. Bacon remarked to the assembled writers, “I hope you do know that I genuinely believe that the arts are not some luxury add-on extra, as they have been treated by many previous Tasmanian governments” (cited in Haley, 2002c: 7). That observation was, however, made in the context of his grand initial idea for *Ten Days on the Island*: “The whole point is to draw attention to the creativity that is in Tasmania. We have a higher percentage [than mainland Australian states] of our population involved in

creative activity and we are trying to draw attention to that, to demonstrate to more people outside what we have here and encourage them to come here". In a personal aside to Rose, Bacon reiterated, "the issue of sponsorship for the festival will not change" (cited in Haley, 2002c: 7). Contradicting the opinion of local arts administrator Sean Kelly (2002: 27), who thought that the Premier had displayed signs of "an appropriate conciliatory admission to the arts community", Timms (2002b: 27) remarked that "Jim Bacon has not apologised to the artists he insulted a month ago. Nor has he backed down. He has simply made a self-serving attempt to ingratiate himself."

In May, Artists for Forests sent the campaign for community funds across Bass Strait through an Australia-wide distribution of 'pledge postcards' with in-kind support from Melbourne postcard manufacturer Avant Card. Before long, those postcards were displayed in cafes, restaurants and hotels around Australia. By mid-June, the fund had increased to over \$75,000 (Int002). Archer was attending a private function in her hometown, Adelaide, when she was presented with one of the postcards. Separately attached to the postcard was a summary of the controversy over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship, to which Archer took offence. Ms Skinner, Archer's lawyer, sent a notice to numerous members of Artists for Forests, requesting, on threat of legal action, that they use "every means possible to ascertain who is responsible for distributing this notice and that appropriate action will be taken to prevent further damage to my client" (cited in Wood, 2002f: 9). Wood conveyed the gist of the letter. Skinner had written that her client had no role in decisions over sponsorship, which were made by the festival Board, the Chair and the Executive Producer; she denied asking artists to sign a document promising not to protest during the festival; she had been quoted out of context in relation to the quote from Peter Sellars that 'money is like sausage meat'; and she claimed as "misleading and untrue and particularly damaging" a quotation purportedly from her,¹³⁷ giving an opinion of the Artists for Forests coalition (Wood, 2002f: 9). Furthermore, "under the terms of her contract, Ms Archer was not able to comment on anything other than artistic matters" (cited in Wood, 2002f: 9).

¹³⁷ No doubt that description was similar to what had already been attributed to Archer elsewhere. For example, in an ABC Radio National broadcast on Friday 3rd May, Timms (2002a: n.p.) told listeners nation-wide that the "festival's artistic advisor, Robyn Archer has labelled the protestors naive, stupid, misguided, dangerous and cowardly. And in a vitriolic letter to the artists, she accused them of being inconsistent".

Scene 9 A State election and writer's protests

On July 20th a State election was held in Tasmania. Bacon's Labor Government retained the fourteen seats it had secured in the previous election. The Greens unexpectedly increased their representation from one to four, at the expense of the Liberals, who lost an equivalent number of seats (Herr, 2003a). Upon resuming power one of the Labor Government's first acts was to seek an extension of the deadline for stopping old-growth logging: logging in nine areas around the island identified as of high conservation value, including the Styx Valley, the Tarkine Forest, and the Great Western Tiers, was scheduled to stop by January 1st 2003. Set by the Premier's own Tasmania Together process, the deadline was only the second resulting from this process to fall due.¹³⁸ Bacon also sought an extension on another forestry deadline, the end of all old-growth logging in Tasmania by 2010, on the grounds that it was "unrealistic" (Bacon, cited in Wood, 2002g: 5). Bacon's commitment to Tasmania Together seemed in doubt, as he ran roughshod over what had been one of his flagship programmes to bring Tasmanians together.

Archer's analysis that artists engaged in solitary creative pursuits were most likely to protest, was supported by the events of September. One significant literary event, the Tasmanian Readers' and Writer's Festival, was to be held at the same time as the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*. Lindsay Simpson, the Program Director of the Tasmanian Readers' and Writers' Festival, wrote to *The Mercury* on September 9th: "The Readers' and Writers' Festival is an independent event, sponsored separately. Our festival happens to coincide with the *10 Days* festival" (Simpson, 2002: 14). Rose (2002b: 16) was quick to interpret this as the literary festival "distancing itself from its relationship with *10 Days* ... because the current sponsorship of *10 Days* ensures many participants will feel uncomfortable attending events" and "as *10 Days* draws nearer all manner of people and events will find themselves in this position". Rose's prediction seemed to hold true when Wood, who had recently won the \$20,000 Vogel Award for her debut novel *The Alphabet of Light and Dark* (Wood, D. 2003), turned down an invitation to be part of the Readers' and Writers' Festival. The taint of Forestry Tasmania sponsorship, in the eyes of many artists and writers, now

¹³⁸ Of the 212 benchmarks set by Tasmania Together, those relating to forestry were the only ones that had not received the unanimous support of CLG members.

extended, no matter how tenuously linked, to all events associated with *Ten Days on the Island*.

The Premier's flagship literary event, the Tasmania Pacific Region Prize, was also coming unstuck. Around September 20th Flanagan withdrew his award-winning novel, *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001a), from competition for the \$40,000 prize:

Whatever position one takes on Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island*, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that its practical outcome will be the slow but insidious poisoning of so much that ought to be so good. I deeply rue that it has left me, for one, with no other choice but to abstain. For the same reason, and with similar regrets, I am declining several other invitations to take part in *Ten Days on the Island* events, including the Tasmanian Readers' and Writers' Festival (Flanagan, 2002: n.p.).

Withdrawing was quite a gesture. The novel was "regarded as a front-runner" (Tuffin, 2002: 5), and Flanagan had a personal investment in the prize, having played a pivotal role in its establishment, suggesting it to the Premier and then working on the steering committee. But Flanagan was distressed by Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship, piqued by the Premier's rejection of his offer to intervene in the controversy, and incensed at the suggestion from festival organisers "that artists should make their protest through their work" which he inferred was "not through their actions" (Flanagan, 2003b: n.p.).

Tasmanian Greens leader, Peg Putt, commended Flanagan's "principled stand in refusing to enter the literary prize" (Parliament of Tasmania, 2002c), but others thought his action misplaced. Journalist Wayne Crawford (2002c: 22) lamented that it was "difficult enough to get such events off the ground here as it is without being white-anted from within". It took additional withdrawals to trigger widespread notice. Not long after Flanagan, the West Australian author Tim Winton withdrew his novel *Dirt Music* (2001). It must have seemed unfortunate to festival organisers that writers were so good at rhetoric. Winton (cited in Stanley, 2003: n.p.) made his thoughts clear in a television interview: "declining to participate ... is a seditious act indeed. Public officials labelling such behaviours as cultural fascism obviously prefer their artists and citizens properly fearful, passive and grateful".

Flanagan and Winton were well-known environmentalists. Their gesture may have caused discomfort and regret, but need not have signalled a stampede.

Archer felt prompted to get in first. She wrote to all artists participating in the festival, including authors in the literary prize. According to Timms (2003: 15), the letter “belittled our cause and advised them to ignore the protests, and its tone was such that it was bound to raise suspicions. It appears that Ms Archer has once again shot herself in the foot”.

Contacting festival participants to warn them about the claims of protesting artists certainly seemed to escalate the controversy; that was apparent by late February 2003, when, a month before the prize was to be awarded, two more authors pulled out, namely the Booker Prize winner Peter Carey and West Australian novelist Joan London. Following Archer’s letter and another communication from the Chair of the prize, Carey sought to find out what was going on (this included phoning Flanagan); upon which he withdrew his *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000). According to his publisher (cited in Norman, 2003: n.p.), it was “a matter of principle. Peter Carey doesn’t support clear-felling of Tasmania forests”. With the withdrawal of London’s *Gilgamesh* (2002), embarrassingly, that left just four short-listed works¹³⁹ in the final running for Australia’s richest literary award.

Academic Henry Reynolds, the Chair of the Tasmania Pacific Region Prize, was distraught (Haley, 2003). Reynolds (cited in Norman, 2003: n.p.) was of the opinion that Flanagan and Artists for Forests were behind a “well-timed and well-executed ambush” designed to elicit maximum damage to the prize.¹⁴⁰ He was soon under fire himself. Flanagan rebutted the imputation of a conspiracy: “I did not contact Tim Winton. I did not contact Joan London. I

¹³⁹ The four left were Patricia Grace, *Dogside Story* (2002), Kate Jennings *Moral Hazard* (2003), Lloyd Jones *The Book of Fame* (2001) and Arnold Zable *Cafe Scheharazade* (2001). To make matters worse (or so it seemed for organisers of the literary prize), Flanagan had e-mailed Jones’ agent on the 25th February, “concerned that, given Lloyd was potentially flying into a controversy, that he have a coherent position in relation to it, so that he might avoid embarrassment. I outlined the debate, making it clear that while I had a position I had no wish to pressure Lloyd, and concluded by saying that should he stay in the prize, I very much looked forward to seeing him when he came to Hobart in late March” (Flanagan, 2003a: n.p.). Lloyd Jones stayed in the prize and won, though he expressed an opinion that it was “vile to chip natural forests” and described his victory as “a bit like reaching the finals of the 100 meters in the Olympics and finding someone has sprained their ankle, someone has the flu, and someone falls over on the way to the race” (cited in Bonner, 2003: n.p.).

¹⁴⁰ For Reynolds (cited in Norman, 2003: n.p.) it was “unethical and inexcusable at this late stage to withdraw. There was no compulsion to be a part of it from the start – Peter Carey accepted being entered into the competition, he accepted that he was shortlisted – and then just weeks before the prize is drawn, he pulls out”.

did not contact Peter Carey" (Flanagan, 2003a: n.p.). Flanagan (2003a: n.p.) wrote to the Advisory Committee of the Tasmania Pacific Region Prize:

What disturbing double standards prevail when it is perfectly acceptable that Robyn Archer use taxpayers money to actively lobby all artists associated with [the] Festival, putting her side of what is a very passionate argument, but it is deemed wrong for me to reply when privately asked my opinion on this matter?

He demanded that Reynolds "cease implying publicly that the withdrawals were the result of some systematic sabotage on the part of writers" yet seemed to commit the same offence in condemning Archer and Reynolds for their "attempted stifling of the free flow of ideas and arguments" (2003a: n.p.). Rose (2003a: 15) rejected the claim of sabotage as 'nonsense' but maintained, "we reserve the right to allow artists to be informed about the community debate on this issue". Thus the opposed sides used the same language of oppression. For Rose (2003b: n.p.), artists were "targeted" as a "scapegoat" by festival organisers and the Tasmanian Government, and she returned the accusation of political interference with her own imputation of a conspiracy in the management of Tasmania's forestry industry:

But why? Why the extraordinary State Government protection of an industry which has lost near 3,000 jobs since the inception of the RFA [Regional Forest Agreement]? Why has the *Gunns* share price increased 268% over the past two years, while Forestry Tasmania returns less than 0.7% to the Tasmanian people and remains \$232 million in debt? Why the secretiveness, the whispered poor commercial returns to owners and to so many of the forestry contractors? Why does any person who questions it [the forestry industry], forestry inspector, hotel operator, consultant or artist have then to live on this island in fear of consequences for job, contract or reputation? Why are sections and aspects of this old and honourable industry becoming bullying and brutish?

Claims that Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of the festival was part of an attempt to silence alternative views on forestry, and accusations that "the practice of clearfelling is destroying not only what is unique and irreplaceable in our forests, but now poisoning our culture" (Flanagan, 2003a: n.p.), were now front and centre of the cultural festival. The

belief that they were true provided the impetus and focus for an alternative arts event run in competition with the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*.

Scene 10 Organising an alternative festival

As 2002 drew to a close the amount of money pledged to Artists for Forests reached \$100,000, although the impossibility of it replacing Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island* had long been recognised. Artists for Forests and others had now set their sights on organising an 'alternative festival', Future Perfect. Future Perfect was intended to articulate a different vision of the arts in Tasmania and to provide an avenue for artists to gain an audience while mainland and international attention was on Tasmania. It was also envisaged as a direct rebuttal of what Future Perfect organisers saw as attempts to silence artists who disagreed with the Tasmanian Government and its forestry practices and policies. That notion of being about 'free speech' was given added gravitas when, in early February 2003, Future Perfect's organisers secured Nobel laureate Gunter Grass as the alternative festival's patron. This coup was reported as an "international embarrassment for Premier Jim Bacon and ... Robyn Archer" (Pos, 2003: n.p.), especially as Grass had agreed to deliver an essay on Bacon's allegation that some Tasmanian artists were 'cultural fascists'. News of Grass' involvement came as another literary event destined for inclusion in *Ten Days on the Island*, the third biennial International Conference of Island Literature, was cancelled. In that charged atmosphere, the apparently innocent question, 'what are you going to during *Ten Days on the Island*?' was laced with political meaning.

Act III: Competing visions for Tasmania

Ten Days on the Island 2003

On the eve of the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*, Archer appeared as guest disc-jockey on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) Radio National *Desert Island Discs* program. The final song chosen by her was *Don't Dream It's Over* by popular Australian/New Zealand band Crowded House. With its iconic and familiar chorus of "they come, they come/to build a wall between us/we know they won't win" Archer was confident that *Ten Days on the Island* would hold together, even if there were doubts that the festival would be capable of holding the island together. "We know what everyone thinks now" said Archer,

“now we have a show to get on, and so many riches to show” (cited in Darby, 2003: n.p.). The mix of defiance and buoyant optimism characterised Archer’s enthusiasm for a festival that had already given her much personal and professional anguish. Having been busy around the island in the lead-up to the festival, her assessment was that “the whole island is more energised, more hopeful than two years ago” (cited in Bingham, 2003: 20). However, as *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Andrew Darby (2003: n.p.) reported to mainland readers, “Archer may want to draw a line, but the forests issue that has dogged this festival is not going away”.

In the south of the island the opening night’s free outdoor party was a case in point. Held again in Hobart’s Salamanca Square, and featuring Los Tres de la Habana a “fiery young seven-piece band” (TDOTI, 2003a: 1) from Cuba, the square was two-thirds full (around 6,000 people) with people keen to enjoy the autumn evening. Some locals were taking the opportunity to give an exhibition of Tasmanian salsa dancing provided by the “perfect party partners direct from Havana” (TDOTI, 2003a: 1). Meanwhile, wandering on stilts through the crowd, were Wilderness Society activists promoting a forest rally to be held the following morning in nearby St David’s Park. Archer (cited in Bingham, 2003: 20) continued to be “disappointed” about such associations: “why would anyone have a rally against anything and feel they had to get leverage from the Festival to do it?” True to their promise to draw attention to Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island*, Greens supporters were distributing green ribbons. Wearing a green ‘armband’ solved the quandary for those who felt compromised by Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship but wanted to support the festival. Wearing an armband was a political act which some thought more passive and complex than boycotting the festival entirely (Int013). Throughout the ten days of the festival, green ribbons were worn by attendees at many events. Some performers and officials wore the armband too. Riley Lee, the “first non-Japanese grandmaster” of the shakuhachi (TDOTI, 2003a: 16), wore his green ribbon on his black kimono when he played at Forestry Tasmania’s Tahune ‘Air Walk’ (Int013), an event directly linked to Forestry Tasmania’s sponsorship. The armband campaign, said Tasmanian Greens leader Peg Putt (Int021), “was so successful that we actually bought out all the green ribbon in Hobart several times over ... and we sold out of those on the first night of the Festival”. Nevertheless, many festival goers wore no green ribbons, steering clear of even a green

jumper. The “silk-lined kimono-style evening jacket and silk blouse” featuring hand-painted motifs such as “Tasmanian flowering beech” and made from “fine Tasmanian wool” (Bingham, 2003: 20) that Hobart-based fashion designer Mervyn McKay made especially for Archer, lacked any distinctive political colour.

Other opportunities to show disapproval of Forestry Tasmania, *Ten Days on the Island*, and the Tasmanian Government included a car-bumper sticker ‘1080 on the Island’ (Figure 6-5) that linked the festival with ‘1080’, a poison laid after forestry regeneration burns to kill native animals that ate plantation seedlings. Likewise, the sticker’s use of ‘Tasmania: The Blue Carrot State’ (carrots being commonly used as blue-dyed 1080 baits) made sarcastic use of the Tasmania State Government’s slogan ‘Tasmania: Your Natural State’, which was displayed across the island’s car registration plates.



Figure 6-5 Car-bumper sticker: ‘1080 on the Island. Tasmania. The Blue Carrot State.’
(circa 2003)

Apart from hosting Riley Lee at its flagship tourist attraction the Tahune Air Walk, Forestry Tasmania’s only other direct involvement in the festival was the exhibition *Island Editions* in its Hobart headquarters. This exhibition displayed ten winning craft works in a “unique competition that invited Tasmanian craftspeople, designers and artists to develop merchandise that embodies the spirit of our island” (TDOTI, 2003a: 31). For the majority, embodying the spirit of the island had involved constructing everyday items – over-sized clothes pegs, salad servers, fruit platters and circular document holders – from increasingly-rare timbers unique to Tasmanian forests (such as Huon Pine, King-Billy Pine, Blackwood, and veneers of Sassafras and Myrtle). These winning designs had been mass-manufactured and were now available for sale in numerous retail outlets around the island. Launching the exhibition, Evan Rolley (2003: n.p.) highlighted that Forestry

Tasmania's twenty-five years of "working with the Tasmanian arts community" stemmed from a belief in "the important cultural values of natural resources". In the context of forestry, his message seemed to echo the *One Tree* exhibition from the inaugural festival. But unlike *One Tree*, where a non-descript stringy-bark destined for wood chipping was transformed into idiosyncratic craft, the message of *Island Editions* was that it was only "when we can link design to commercial production that we can really start to change the way people think about [the opportunities] the arts ... [and] design ... provides for our regional economy" (Rolley, 2003: n.p.). The recommendation was for an art production matching the Tahune Air Walk: a hybrid entity that was a spectacular tourist attraction, and, for Forestry Tasmania, an exemplar of sustainable forestry practices.

For the estimated 40,000 people from the mainland and overseas who visited Tasmania during the festival (Bingham, 2003), the politics might have appeared puzzling, although the island did have an obdurate place in the national imaginary as being characterised by intense division over environmental disputes (Hay, 1986, 1987, 1991/1992; Haynes, 2006). A glossy-colour brochure explained to such visitors and locals why many artists "cannot support *Ten Days on the Island*":

Ten Days on the Island is being used by the Tasmanian Government to launder the image of an industry that is destroying the globally unique old growth forests of Tasmania. While the clearfelling and burning of our forests continues, we do not accept Forestry Tasmania as a suitable sponsor for *Ten Days on the Island*.

After providing a summary 'background' of the controversy, the authors (Artists for Forests, 2003)¹⁴¹ of the brochure outlined the island's forestry practices, claiming that "80% of Australia's woodchips currently come from Tasmania's native forests"; noting that "Forestry Tasmania ... currently returns 0.7% to the Tasmanian people and is \$232 million in debt"; arguing that more "than 70 log trucks pass through Hobart every day, 24 hours a

¹⁴¹ The email address for Artists for Forests was provided on the brochure. A number of web site addresses were included, intimating that these organisations were also involved. Web addresses included www.doctorsforforests.com/arts/ ('Doctors for Forests', one of a number of environmental lobby groups); www.discover-tasmania.com (a web site that mimicked the Government's official tourism web site, Discover Tasmania, and which the Government tried, unsuccessfully, to close down); www.tasmaniantimes.com (Tasmania Times, an on-line 'alternative' media outlet ran by journalist Lindsay Tuffin); and www.wilderness.org.au (The Wilderness Society).

day, 7 days a week”; and asserting that “95% of Tasmania’s native timber is exported for paper and packaging”. Those specific assertions were interspersed amongst text that told a more general story about forestry practices. For example, in relation to ongoing debates about the employment value of “traditional resource-based” industries compared with those associated with the “new economies”, the brochure stated that the “clearfelling of Tasmania’s native forests directly employs some 350 people. More than 3,000 forestry jobs have been lost since 1996. Tasmania’s tourism industry, built on a clean green brand, employs almost 20,000 people”.

After remaining largely silent on the sponsorship controversy for some months, Forestry Tasmania finally went on the offensive during the festival with a series of newspaper advertisements in Tasmania’s three regional daily papers. ‘Ten myths about forestry’ ran throughout the festival as each day another ‘myth’ about forestry propagated by those opposed to the industry was exposed. On Friday 28th March, the day the festival opened, the first advertisement appeared:

Myth 1. ‘Forests are disappearing’

Our Commitment: To continue to replant at least three trees for every one harvested. To increase the percentage of non-clear-felled forest where this can be achieved safely and forest species regenerated (Forestry Tasmania, 2003b: 12).

Other myths included: “Myth 2. ‘Forest practices destroy water quality’” – “streamside reserves will be maintained and small watercourse management will be improved” (Forestry Tasmania, 2003c: 6); “Myth 3. ‘There are few jobs in forestry’” – “to create new jobs in thinning and pruning forests” and “to develop new value-adding projects to produce veneers and create local employment” (Forestry Tasmania, 2003d: 17); “Myth 4. ‘Forestry and tourism aren’t compatible’” – “to expand the already successful Tahune Air Walk and Forest Eco Centre and create new forest attractions outside national parks” and “to develop protocol agreements for co-operation between the forestry and tourism sectors” (Forestry Tasmania, 2003e: 11). Organisers of *Ten Days on the Island* were aghast at the advertisements:

Utterly disgraceful ... I am as critical of that as I was of banners in the city saying *Ten Days on the Island* Wilderness Society anti-forestry rally. I just think riding on the back of the festival for political reasons is inexcusable. ... [and fatal to] use it for political means, because the minute you do that, it's fucked.

One representative of Tourism Tasmania rejected the idea that Forestry Tasmania's running of the advertisements during the festival amounted to using *Ten Days on the Island* as a 'political vehicle'. On the contrary, they believed the artists' protest had been an attempt to "hijack" the festival, politicising what "was in fact a community event"; people who attended the 2003 festival did so in defiance of this politicisation, showing that the festival was "apolitical, and representative of our great community" (Int005).

Forestry Tasmania had been "under enormous fire" and the participant thought the advertisements were defensible as attempts "to answer some of the allegations that were made through other mediums beforehand" (Int005). Asked about whether or not Tourism Tasmania was concerned about the impact of forestry practices on Tasmania's tourism industry, the participant was initially defensive, asking in reply: "what context does that have here?" (Int005). Admitting that the organisation was sensitive about being "used as a target" by people keen to highlight what they thought were incompatibilities between tourism and forestry, the participant noted that members of government and industry working in tourism and forestry "were having greater dialogue and working closer together so as to ensure that we can work as compatible industries, understanding that both have needs and requirements" (Int005).

Another representative of Tourism Tasmania was more straight-forward in assessing the impact of forestry on tourism and the brand values of Tasmania more generally: "I am not supportive of the high-handedness of one industry sector at the expense of everybody else. You know, clear-felling right to the road and all that sort of stuff" (Int005). A member of the *Ten Days on the Island* Board thought that the advertisements were "reactionary to what had happened, basically" though they did think there would have been better ways of handling things, "I am probably of the school that [would] let those kinds of things work their way through rather than responding to them" (Int006).

In many interviews, participants expressed the belief that the controversy over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island* was about how the 'debate' had been *managed*, rather than incompatibility between forestry and the cultural festival, that was damaging the island: "I think that ... the debate ... has done more damage and how the debate is managed is far more damaging than much of the practices" (Int004).

Other sponsors of the festival were in broad agreement that the most damaging aspect of the sponsorship was the controversy it had generated, especially insofar as that impacted negatively on the image of the island that the festival was designed to promote. Lyndon Adams, a member of the Brand Tasmania Council and Director of Sales and Marketing for an iconic Tasmanian beer company, appeared guarded when replying to a question about the impact of forestry practices on the island's image, "everyone has a role to play ... in supporting the attributes and imagery that Tasmania is trying to develop for itself ... one weak link in that chain ... can damage ... other brands" (Int018). Rather than seeing a need for forestry practice to change, he emphasised the need for careful management of conflicts over forestry issues.

In the eyes of those who saw management of the image of Tasmania as the issue, rather than forestry practices themselves, most guilty of politicising the festival were the protesting artists, not Forestry Tasmania. Given that the arts in Tasmania have always been central to the politics of the environment and related questions about Tasmania's future (Bonyhady, 1996, 2004; Hay, 1996b, 2001a, 2001b, 2003a; Haynes, 2001, 2002, 2006), the ways in which protagonists sought to both separate arts and politics and bring them together was a curious mix for a festival that meant to celebrate Tasmanian culture.

In the end, the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island* festival consisted of over 250 events. The decentralised delivery of the festival program and the requirement that the festival have its 'roots in community' was reflected in a massive increase in public involvement compared to the 2001 festival: over 500 community members joined 500 local Tasmanian and international artists from 17 island cultures to host events in no less than 38 separate locations around the island (Parliament of Tasmania, 2003). Over 100,000 people attended a mix of free and ticketed events (TDOTI, 2003b), numbers in keeping with those that had

attended the 2001 festival. However, for the protesting artists, the main event took place two days before *Ten Days on the Island* opened.

Future Perfect

Future Perfect opened in North Hobart on the evening of 26th March 2003. In comparison to *Ten Days on the Island* it was less a multi-art cultural festival and more an exhibition of visual art and writings worked-up in response to the controversy surrounding ‘the official festival’:

Future Perfect stands alone, distinct and separate from *10 Days on the Island*. Future Perfect is a forum where artists and writers can explore our island’s destiny uncompromised and unsullied by the sponsorship of forces that sponsor the destruction of what is unique and irreplaceable on our island ... It shows we can author our island’s tomorrow (Bett and Castles, 2003: 1).

Future Perfect consisted of art works and accompanying text placed into shop fronts, restaurants, pubs and galleries along a length of Elizabeth Street a few blocks out of the city centre. Two prominent Tasmanians, Dick Bett and Gerard Castles organised the venture.

Bett was a commercial gallery owner, ambivalent member of the Government’s Cultural Industry Council, and had been heavily involved with the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island*. Incensed by Bacon’s labelling of artists as ‘Green extremists’ and ‘cultural fascists’ (Int020) Bett saw Future Perfect not as “a protest *per se*” (which he thought the Tasmanian Greens had tried to turn it into) but as giving “a voice” to “visual artists and writers and thinkers and people who have a real commitment to Tasmania and to the future of the place” (Int020).

Castles, like Bett, was concerned about what he saw as a systematic denial of ‘voice’. He had been an international management consultant before returning to Tasmania, and, with another member of the Tasmania Together Community Leaders Group, Anna Pafitis, had been a public spokesperson for Tasmania Together’s 20 year vision for the State, in charge of communicating the views of Tasmanians expressed in community forums held around the island. They were removed from this role by Premier Bacon for making public what

they perceived as political interference in the process of reporting on those consultations. Tasmania Together, supposedly a process held at arm's length from the Tasmanian Government, became dominated by a "constant tension to dumb down what we were coming up with, to a consensus, safe, outcome" (Int016). According to Castles, the Department of Premier and Cabinet "tried to squash" the vision for the island that Tasmania Together was eliciting genuinely through participative public consultations. Participants in Tasmania Together consultations:

When they looked at Tasmania now, they saw huge issues around poverty and isolationism and failure to capture potential and poor educational outcomes, people saw the reality of Tasmania. But when they looked at the future, that whole thing about identity and difference was central (Int016).

In town halls and meeting rooms across the island, Tasmanians, asserted Castles, struggled to articulate that notion of identity and difference without making reference to the Green's slogan of 'a clean and green Tasmania':

People love this place, but they had real fears and almost anger about what had happened in the past. They were concerned about the myriad of issues that were affecting them now, but the future they saw was around that difference ['clean and green'], and if you wanted to have a word for it, it would be identity. People saw that. We could employ a firm of consultants, and pay them ten million bucks, and they'd tell us that the competitive advantage that this place has is its identity. But that's politically, you know, that's absolutely fucking dangerous. OK, so what does that ['clean and green' identity] mean? GE-free [agriculture], stopping clear-felling [of forests], driving tourism hard, attracting new industries that actually fit with this identity ... So, the vision we could write was crystal clear. And the strategy we could write was crystal clear. But, you've got the Labor Party that says, 'Well hang on, if we actually adopt that [strategy] then the Green's are going to tell us "told you so!"' (Int016).

Stung by his removal from Tasmania Together and increasingly critical of the Government's mismanagement of a 'strategic' approach to branding the State, which he asserted "must be defined, communicated to the world and lived" (Castles, 2001: 114; see also Crawford, 2002b), Castles was now of the opinion "that change, real change comes

from outside of that formal [political] system and it's about active individual citizens, it's about ... social entrepreneurs" (Int016).

Future Perfect provided the means for Betts, Castles and protesting artists to articulate their vision for Tasmania "a place of paradox ... a place of beauty and of ugliness, a place of despair and a place of hope, a place of poverty and a place of richness", to give "voice to our dreams" (Bett and Castles, 2003: 1) which they felt Tasmania Together and *Ten Days on the Island* had denied them. Castles and Bett had assembled a highly diverse group of local and national 'social entrepreneurs' to write for Future Perfect, including Peter Cundall (ABC television gardening icon), John Young (wooden-boat builder), Phillip Adams (ABC national radio broadcaster), Saul Eslake (ANZ Bank Chief Economist), Greg French (trout-fishing author), David Hansen (art curator), John Harrower (Tasmanian Anglican Bishop), Duncan Kerr (Federal MHA), Martin Flanagan (sports writer for *The Age*), Jocelynn Scutt (Tasmania's Anti-Discrimination Commissioner), Supreme Court Justice Pierre Slicer, Helen Gee (environmentalist) and Senator Bob Brown (Australian Greens leader). These people were instructed to work in collaboration with one or more prominent Tasmanian artists, including Tom Samek, Jacqui Stockdale, David Keeling, Robert Morris-Nunn, David Stephenson, Richard Wastell, Gay Hawkes, Tim Burns, Jonathan Kimberley, Peter Adams, Barbie Kjar, Steve Thomas, Matt Newton, Stewart MacFarlane, Martin Walch, and Raymond Arnold.

Art curator and critic David Hansen admitted he did not really know what he and fellow collaborator, painter Richard Wastell, were supposed to be doing in articulating their vision for Tasmania. "God knows we tried", Hansen (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 30) wrote,

but after a fortnight of editing and overpainting all we had managed was a couple of paragraphs so pared-back and open-ended as to be almost meaningless, and a handful of canvasses so architecturally determined as to be little more than illustration: some kind of monument to failed dialogue.

Eventually, Hansen and Wastell abandoned dialogue and reverted to what they were both good at individually – writing about art as art, and painting.

Other *Future Perfect* writers/artists were less concerned about having to fulfil any particular 'eco-political' brief in their collaborative contribution to an 'authoring of our island's tomorrow'. Nevertheless, trees and forestry were popular themes. The collaboration between Bob Brown and artists Chris Cowles and Di McPherson produced a straight forward response. Brown (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 52) proposed a future for Tasmania in 2042 as a desirable eco-tourist destination with "2.64 million people in the queue awaiting entry vouchers", while the artists provided a 'Chainsaw Museum' visitor information centre (Figure 6-6) that mocked the *Ten Days on the Island* venue, The Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame.



Figure 6-6 *Future Island* by Chris Cowles and Di McPherson
(in Betts and Castles, 2003: 53)

Some of the celebrated writers used trees as an opportunity to get away from their celebrated roles. ABC national radio broadcaster Phillip Adams (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 10) confessed: "all my life I've loved trees ... Particular trees. Personal trees. And trees in general". According to Adams (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 10), trees should be given human rights, indeed enfranchised. But "while some people desperately try to plant them, the Tasmaniacs keep smashing them down. Without respect, almost as if they hated them".

Australia's most famous gardener, Peter Cundall (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 6), linked trees with larger themes of truth and greed: "Greed demands more than wealth. It wants land, power, influence and total control of everything and everyone". The Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) bank's chief economist, Tasmanian Saul Eslake (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 22), stayed by his profession, "Tasmania's future cannot possibly lie predominately in the volume production of essentially unprocessed commodities" but in the island's "ability to produce and sell highly differentiated goods and services embodying a high intellectual content".

While those national voices gave Australian-wide credibility to visions expressed by the alternative festival, the patron of Future Perfect, Nobel laureate Gunter Grass, lent international, and specifically European, import to local claims of being 'silenced'. In the Future Perfect brochure, a photograph of Grass (Figure 6-7) underscored the 'continental' significance of Grass and his message for Tasmania that the "forests belong to our future".

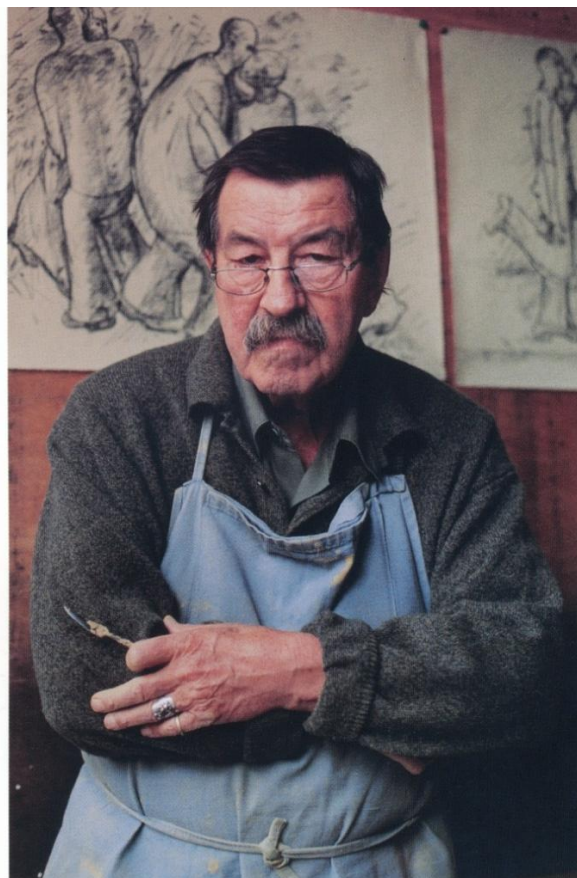


Figure 6-7 Gunter Grass in Future Perfect brochure
Photo: Dirk Reinartz (in Bett and Castles, 2003: 3)

Grass had been unable to visit Tasmania, so his address, to a crowd of Future Perfect audience members and numerous local, national and international media reporters, was delivered by another European, Dagmar Nordberg, a former Swedish Environmentalist of the Year (Int014). After invoking a vision of global environmental crisis, Grass (cited in Bett and Castles, 2003: 2) declared that:

The eyes of the world are on Tasmania, on the last remaining old growth forests on this island. We no longer want its strength to be chopped by chainsaws, its wealth to be squandered, devalued as copy paper and degraded to chip material! ...

In the past, this island was the feared, infamous penal island of Colonial Britain. We want to set a signal on this magical place in the Southern Ocean. We want to contribute towards a change in direction for Tasmania. We want to help bring a halt to destruction: the heritage of a bitter dark past ...

To this day firebombs are dropped over clearings to destroy what life and vegetation remain. This is inhumane. It is part of a failed, yet still dangerous, uncultured attitude, of which burning books is but one aspect, and poisoning animals and plants another.

By resorting to creativity, democracy, care and strength, we oppose this uncultured, unsustainable behaviour.

The inhumane attitude of a past prison world must not be allowed to maintain its hostility towards humans and nature by destroying our natural heritage: the irreplaceable ancient forests of Tasmania.

We therefore want to set a signal for a humane future on this island. We are working for a future of peaceful co-existence of culture and nature.

The deployment of Gunter Grass' international cultural authority gave the controversy over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of *Ten Days on the Island* a significance that linked the island's insular politics to global environmental, political and social issues. A long-repeated claim made by Tasmania's environmental lobby was that the true distinctiveness of the island lay in the possibility that "if we can accept the view that man and nature are inseparable parts of the unified world – then Tasmania can be a shining beacon in a dull, uniform and largely artificial world" (Truchanas, 1971, cited in Pybus and Flanagan, 1990:

n.p.). That claim was given voice by Grass from outside the State. For Tasmanian Greens Leader Peg Putt, his speech proved that Future Perfect “wasn’t just about forestry; it was about the subjugation of the arts to political ends” (Int021).

While Grass lent international weight to the message of protesting artists, resulting in much mainland and international media coverage for Future Perfect, the principal ‘Tasmanian’ voice was firmly located in Richard Flanagan’s Future Perfect launch speech. Repeated at The Wilderness Society’s forest rally held on the first Saturday of *Ten Days on the Island* and reproduced in both a small book, *As Sun to the Mountain* (2003), and in Tasmania’s premier literary journal, *Island Magazine*, Flanagan’s gothic speech held nothing back. Invoking “my fellow Tasmanians”, Flanagan held that Future Perfect

represents an extraordinary moment of liberation for Tasmanian art, the moment when it finally found the courage to emancipate itself from the shackles of petty government patronage and the blinkered horizons they necessarily imposed, the moment when our art finished moving from a peripheral position in Tasmanian society to a central one ...

Future Perfect is not a political exhibition. But it does arise out of a very real political struggle. Tasmania contains imprisoned within it extraordinary fresh forces, seething and bursting to break out. But when crushed by the idiocy of its bureaucracy and the lies and arrogance of its government, these forces lead only to gloom and despair. Only in our arts do they find positive expression ...

Lies, innuendo, smears, the threat of no more employment: all these devices are used and used to great effect to bring an oppressive silence back to this island. And yet, at this time of darkness it is Tasmanian artists and writers who have stepped forward to speak of the light of truth. They have of course been pilloried. We have had that great proponent of free speech, Robyn Archer, as recently as last week saying that artists should make their protest through their work and not through their actions. Is she saying that ... [great writers such as] Solzhenitsyn [were] wrong? This is the argument of the oppressors, the book burners, the soldiers compelling Socrates to drink hemlock. It is the solace of oppression, the acrid taste of tyranny...

His [Bacon’s] government’s abysmal handling of *Ten Days on the Island* has brought anguish to us all whether we are taking part in this festival or not. They have tried to

divide us, to diminish us, to make us feel less, to say that unless Jim and Robyn bring in a clog-dancing troupe from Malawi we have no real culture. And for a short time they succeeded ... In another time and place Henry Reynolds and Robyn Archer would have gleefully rowed us down the [River] Derwent to the traitor's gate. And yet who is it who has betrayed our island, its unique beauty, its extraordinary power? Who is selling its soul for a mess of pottage trying to clothe the tawdry, shameful nature of the exchange in the motley of an arts circus? Who is Robyn Archer to say we are wrong? It is an easy thing for her to make jokes about John Howard to an inner city crowd in Melbourne or Sydney. But here, if you make a stand, you pay for it ... You pay for it over and over, with your name and your prospects for work in the island. You pay for it by being sent into exile in your own society. You pay for it by being allowed no honourable way to contribute to the betterment of your world. You pay for it by seeing what matters in your own world deliberately, shamefully ignored here in Tasmania ... It is how the island has been run since convict times and it is how the island continues to be run, with fear and intimidation ...

We hear more and more these strange days of what we only once dreamt: that we might be defined not as a backward society or rednecks and hicks, a place haunted by the past, but as an island of imagination, a society of the future. Of Geoff Dyer's win of the Archibald Prize, the Sydney Morning Herald wrote that this was just the latest symbol of, and I quote, 'the mighty Tasmanian art renaissance, that continues to spill out poets, painters, writers and musicians'. This renaissance has happened not because of any Tasmanian Government but in spite of it, in opposition to it. ... It happened, slowly, uneasily, painfully over many years.

For at least one Tasmanian artist, Flanagan's rhetoric was revolutionary, though the sheer multitude of targets identified was confusing: Patrick Hall said to Dick Bett the following morning, "I felt like running down the street with a Molotov cocktail, except I didn't know where to throw it!" (Int020).

Afterword: rapprochement and resolution?

On the 25th November 2003 the Premier reflected upon the success of the 2003 *Ten Days on the Island*, reiterating that the festival "profiled the State as a cultural epicentre":

Audiences and artists alike shared and celebrated the unique characteristics of living on an island, creating long-lasting cultural and economic benefits for Tasmania. The role *Ten Days* plays in promoting Tasmanian culture, as well as hosting international culture, cannot be underestimated ... Its impact in local communities is one of its greatest strengths and something that makes it unique in the national arts calendar (Parliament of Tasmania, 2003: n.p.).

The Premier had a few words to say about protesting artists: “It is very disappointing that a small number of people tried to detract from all these positive benefits to Tasmania by attacking the festival for their own political ends”. He then announced that he was opting out:

Ten Days on the Island is not about politics; it is a festival for the entire community of Tasmania, and, because I value that, I have decided to step down as Chair of the Board of *Ten Days on the Island*. I will hand over the reins to an extremely well-qualified, high-profile and apolitical new Chair; former Governor Sir Guy Green ... Forestry Tasmania has informed the Board of *Ten Days on the Island* that it will not renew its corporate partnership with *Ten Days on the Island* for 2005. The Government, of course, will remain the festival’s most significant investor and I will retain my involvement as patron of the festival.

Heather Rose, spokesperson for Artists for Forests, was interviewed the following day about her reaction to the Premier’s announcement:

Tim Cox: I’m speaking to Heather Rose: Would you imagine ... that this division, this particular drawing up of lines, will ... end now that Forestry’s out of it?

Heather Rose: I think it will be a wonderful opportunity for the arts community to have a healing with the Government, and have a healing with those people in arts administration who obviously needed to take the Government’s side. I think it will be a wonderful opportunity for the community to finally embrace *Ten Days* in a way that we did in the first *Ten Days on the Island*, when we could all be proud of this extraordinary event. I hope that we see a lot more local support for the artists that participate in *Ten Days*. I hope we see a lot more funding put into the arts generally, and not just into *Ten Days on the Island* ... [W]e can say, ‘OK a small victory’, but really the battle is yet to be

done to get the Government to put an end to these forest practices that are devastating our State on a daily basis.

Tim Cox: What about the move by the Premier to step down as the Chairman of the *Ten Days* Board? Does that further depoliticise it for you?

Heather Rose: I think it's a really wise move ... I think Sir Guy Green is a wonderful choice for that, you know, he is 'the peoples' person' and ... will be a great spokesperson for the festival and a great administrator on that Board, so it's good.

Tim Cox: He [Sir Guy Green] was a little critical ... of those who opposed *Ten Days* last year, suggesting that they were furthering their personal agendas. Do you take that on the chin?

Heather Rose: You know, I think that it's easy to say it was a political thing, but it would be just as easy to say that it was always a political move to make Forestry Tasmania a major sponsor when they have such a tarnished public image. So I think it's easy to throw mud either way... And we just hope that the Premier really gets this message that we do want an end to these forest practices.

Was that an apparent reconciliation between protesting artists, the Government and *Ten Days on the Island*? Or did it forewarn more of the same? An intense public performance of Tasmania took place between the start of the 2001 *Ten Days on the Island* and the end of the 2003 festival: a melodrama that engaged many of the key players in Tasmania. But with what result? Had the festival come full circle, and in its latest performance returned back to the past? Bacon's and Archer's cultural festival had promised so much because it was new, untainted and naïve in the face of all that had gone before; it was now born again as another element in the diverse and complex landscape of Tasmania's social, political and cultural life. Having undergone a peculiarly Tasmanian initiation rite, via the trauma of a controversy over forestry, the festival now seemed blooded in the politics of Tasmania's islandness. It was now part of Tasmania. In a strange way, did that mean that it had achieved what it had promised, and encompassed the difficult island in a celebration of island cultures? From the perspective of the Tasmanian problem, was *Ten Days on the Island* the beginning of a new process, or part and parcel of Tasmania's fragmented archipelago?

Since the 2003 festival, *Ten Days on the Island* has been largely and relatively uncontroversial in its performance of Tasmanian cultural distinctiveness. Festivals in 2005, 2007 and 2009 continued to stage complex combinations of Tasmanian and international islander art. Successive iterations of *Ten Days on the Island* bring the arts to more and more places within Tasmania, laying claim to being the largest decentralised arts festival in Australia. However, there remain deep antagonisms on all sides over the controversy that Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship elicited, and the island's forestry industry continues to be a source of distrust, anger and divisiveness. In the next and final chapter of this thesis, I return to the central question which has sustained these empirical investigations; the significance of islandness to Tasmania, and explore the transformation of islandness that, as a cultural celebration of Tasmania-as-island and Tasmanians-as-islanders, *Ten Days on the Island* sought to engender.

Chapter 7 - Performing the *isolario*: a Tasmanian compendium

[T]he late former Premier Jim Bacon¹⁴² argued that the economic and cultural changes taking place constituted the creation of a 'New Tasmania' – a Tasmania that could no longer be dismissed by the old clichéd stereotypes. In essence, he argued that the images which previously defined Tasmania as socially, culturally and economically backward had been replaced by new images in which Tasmania was represented as confident, sophisticated, and mature.

Stewart Prins, 'Jim Bacon: a vision' 2005: n.p.

Introduction

In 2002, Jeffrey Rae, an economic and policy consultant with 30 years experience of working with the Australian Government, reflected on the long-line of governmental inquiries into "the well-worn status of the 'Tasmanian problem'" (2002b: 33) by using the island-State as a means to reflect on another island jurisdiction's future, New Zealand. Aiming to ensure that "New Zealand can avoid a Tasmanian future" (2002b: x), Rae (2002b: viii) concluded that "geography affects economic performance, [and] governments can do little to reduce any adverse impact that it may have".

The argument developed in this thesis contradicts the assessment that island geography results in a monolithic and intractable social condition. Rae need only to have looked at the Bacon Government's myriad of programs directed towards acting on and through Tasmanian islandness, programs that included the *Ten Days on the Island* festival, to find contrary evidence for the claim that geography was situated beyond the reach of governmental imaginaries and interventions. But Rae (2002b: 35) understood Tasmanian islandness as ontologically self-evident: "Tasmania's size and geography have not changed fundamentally since the early 1990s – continental drift is much slower than glacial and the

¹⁴² After serving as Premier for close to 6 years, Bacon was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer in February 2004, resigned in March, and died on 20th June the same year. Robyn Archer sang *Non, je ne regrette rien* at his State funeral. Eulogies included Richard Flanagan's (2004: 13) highly critical 'The selling-out of Tasmania', in which he asserted that "Bacon was astute enough to ride a resurgent sense of Tasmanian destiny, and fortunate enough to present it as his own accomplishment". The close friend of Bacon and new Premier of Tasmania, Paul Lennon, declared publically that Flanagan was a "traitor to Tasmania" and no longer welcome in the 'New Tasmania' (cited in Sutherland, 2006: 2). Later Lennon (2008: 9) lamented that the "real pity ... is that Richard Flanagan could do such good things for Tasmania if we could allow ourselves to be united by the things we agree on".

population loss that the State has suffered over the decade has been relatively small". Among a litany of disadvantages that Rae (2002b: 45) saw as stemming from Tasmania's geography were "cultural impediments to [economic] performance". Influenced by "an emerging body of theoretical and empirical literature [Rae had in mind the writings of Richard Florida] that points to cultural influences as being important determinants of economic development", Rae noted that "the recent official inquiries into the 'Tasmanian problem' have commented on the fiercely local parochialism that bedevils policy debates in Tasmania and on the adverse impacts that it has had on the policy choices that have been made there" (2002b: 45). But, as he did with geographical questions, Rae (2002b: 45-46) set the possibility of "cultural contributions" to the resolution of the Tasmanian problem aside, as

many of these cultural issues are not unique to the economy in which they are observed ... [and] cultural factors are, by their nature, not a product of conscious design. They are informal, arise spontaneously, evolve slowly and are not able to be changed rapidly by any individual or organisation – even the coercive power of government is unable to shape culture to conform to a particular design.

Again, Rae might have looked to the Bacon Government's various attempts to act on and through Tasmanian culture to find mixed evidence for that claim. However, Rae conceived of culture as analogous to Tasmania's island status, as ontologically fixed, perhaps not 'slower than glacial' in its dynamics, but certainly evolutionary and reactionary: "culture tends to evolve over time as individuals adjust to changing circumstances" (2002b: 46). For Rae, culture could only be an explanatory variable of the Tasmanian problem if it were in some way unique to Tasmanians, and given he found that "Tasmania shares with the rest of Australia many features of culture that were inherited from Britain", there seemed no evidence for an Australian, let alone a Tasmanian cultural distinctiveness. Unlike defenders of Tasmanian uniqueness – even advocates as politically disparate as Flanagan and Bacon – Rae did not regard Tasmania as "another country" (Flanagan, 2001b: 90), separate from continental Australia, even though he projected into the future a distinctive 'Tasmanian problem'.

In this concluding chapter, I synthesise the varied expressions of Tasmanian islandness identified through the mixed-method inquiry reported in the previous four chapters. Tracing discourses of the Tasmanian problem from the early-twentieth century into the present, I argued in Chapter 3 that, until recently, islandness has been constituted by government as a social disability imposed by nature and maintained by a community complicit in its own backwardness: a community destined to maintain its position at the margins of modernity, unable to participate in the benefits of technological progress, economic prosperity and rational social order. In Chapter 4, I argued that while governmental framing of the Tasmanian problem remains substantially unchanged in the new century, there has been a rise in governmental optimism that, in the flowering of capitalism made possible by neoliberal economic reform, electronic communication technologies and global cultural flows, the restrictions of islandness could be transmuted into advantages. As demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, this turn to islandness as solution to the problems that islandness brings is nowhere more evident than in the technical rendering of island culture that characterises the biennial *Ten Days on the Island* festival. In this chapter, I synthesise the varied constitutions of islandness present within governmental attempts to address the Tasmanian problem and gesture towards political alternatives to governmental framing of a singular vision for Tasmania. I elaborate on the contemporary possibilities for Tasmanian islandness through the introduction of a form of ‘cartographic writing’ (Conley, 1996) popular in the early-modern period, the fifteenth and sixteenth century *isolario*, or ‘book of islands’.

(1) The political constitution of islandness: the Tasmanian problem

The empirical inquiry undertaken in this study rests upon theoretical analysis that locates islandness not with topographical form but with topological orderings. Building on the philosophical insights of Michel Serres (1995a), amongst others associated with actor network theory, I have presented islandness as the performative achievement of three patterned and interconnected relations: namely, land-water, island-continent and island-island. Specific, contingent and indeterminate enactments of islandness work through these relations, assembling diverse entities into complex material and discursive associations that sustain multiple island constitutions. In my view, this threefold relational

typology of island topology offers a valuable alternative to the deterministic causality implicit in many accounts of 'the island effect' within the field of island studies. My investigation of Tasmanian islandness recasts the possibility of an island effect by resisting pre-given and fixed ontological categories of Tasmanian nature and Tasmanian culture so as to study Tasmanian politics as the outcomes of the collective achievement of different entities and agencies working through their own equally indeterminate and shifting agendas.

I have approached the question of the ontological constitution of Tasmanian islandness through a specific governmental project peculiar to the island-State; the overcoming of the 'Tasmanian problem'. A close discourse analysis of three twentieth century governmental inquiries addressed to the aetiology of Tasmanian disabilities revealed that the Tasmanian problem was framed as the problem of being an island community. In these inquiries islandness was, paradoxically, both an obdurate characteristic of Tasmania and a condition needing to be overcome. Repeated attempts to formulate and articulate policy programs on the basis of the governmental imaginary of an island community were met with repeated interference from place and people. The peculiar success of governmental failures to solve the Tasmanian problem was to recursively embed features of islandness expressed in the Tasmanian problem as essential characteristics of Tasmanian life. Governmental framings of the Tasmanian problem intensified and amplified islandness as an authentic and autochthonous feature of Tasmanian people and place, even while islandness was a marker of Tasmanian backwardness and resistance to governmental salvation.

Shifts in modes of governance towards the end of the twentieth century uncovered 'culture' as a novel register for neo-liberal governmental intervention, in the process re-discovering an ancient political strategy. Governmental intervention within culture is associated with the increasing fragmentation of 'society' and 'the nation-state' in transnational flows that facilitate 'community' and 'region' as new territorialisations of governance (Rose, 1996, 1999). The *realpolitik* of early twenty-first century Tasmania provides an example of the way in which islands are resurfacing as organic figures for neoliberal governance. In a global order of intensifying displacement, the natural property

of being bounded by sea sustains dreams of internal qualification and external projection of a distinctive, place-bound, islander 'way of life'.

In Tasmania, the long history of apparent resistance to an impossible framing of islandness seems to position the island-State as amenable to new forms of governance that work through Tasmanian islandness by celebrating the distinctiveness of place and people. Tasmania appears pre-disposed to novel forms of governance through culture from both an appraisal of what is deemed characteristic of Tasmania and from an appraisal that those characteristics represent Tasmanian resistance. Tasmanian culture, now understood to be the totality of a 'way of life' expressed through intimate and necessary relations between community and island, is both a marker of resistance to governance and an authentic new resource for governance. It is framed as a strategic site requiring governmental attention and an all-encompassing characteristic to be celebrated and capitalised. A cultural festival provides the means for pursuing this double logic. *Ten Days on the Island* sought to intervene into the Tasmanian problem by inverting the appraisal that islandness was a problem (i.e. to suggest there never was a problem) by celebrating all that makes Tasmania unique: its island culture. Thus, the dual political function of the mobilisation of an arts festival was to both celebrate Tasmanian island culture and transform Tasmanian island culture.

The empirical investigations undertaken in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 track governmental attempts to address the Tasmanian problem by acting to transform Tasmanian islandness through the mobilisation of culture via an arts festival. The ordering of that sentence could be re-arranged, for the governmental deployment of islandness was also associated with a desire to act on the culture of Tasmanians so as to address the problematic identities of Tasmanians. Empirically through the varied performances of Tasmanian islandness achieved by *Ten Days on the Island*, multiple geographies and cultures are intertwined, and none appear as ontologically grounded as previous or contemporary assessments imagine.

In the inaugural *Ten Days on the Island* the governmental ambitions towards which the cultural festival was directed are explored through the ethnographic and participant observation imperative the festival itself engenders in Tasmanians. In presenting a

diversity of island cultures through complex assemblages of art, place and people, *Ten Days on the Island* works to re-configure Tasmanian islandness: one principal re-assembling is to shift Tasmania away from the mainland and towards a world of islands united through the shared affinities of island cultures. If the governmental dream of constituting Tasmanians as cohesive islanders and Tasmania as a singular island in a world of islands had appeared successful, then the environmental controversy that gripped the second festival appeared to many to reinstate a familiar characteristic of the island-State – its divisive and fraught identity as a fractured island.

In the performances of Tasmanian islandness that the second festival staged it was evident that some Tasmanians thought celebration was a cover for transformation, even while they applauded the idea of transformation and had, indeed, been significant in long-standing calls for Tasmania to capitalise on its distinctive culture. The controversy over Forestry Tasmania's sponsorship of the festival provided fresh means to revive and reassert, while reinventing, the Tasmanian problem, especially those that understood the island-State as inextricably bound in a dense networks of 'internecine antagonisms' over environmental issues. When the paradigmatic voice of Richard Flanagan (2003) appeared to enact a Tasmanian distinctiveness, in his assertion that *Ten Days on the Island* "tried to divide us, to diminish us, to make us feel less, to say that unless Jim [Bacon] and Robyn [Archer] bring in a clog-dancing troupe from Malawi we have no real culture. And for a short time they succeeded", his angry resistance to the cultural festival reflected more than a detached concern for the Tasmanian environment. It reflected a tension in the festival between celebration and intervention, between the particular island of Tasmania and the universal figure of island, between the singular and the many Tasmanias. In re-positioning Tasmania away from the mainland, the traditional source of Tasmanian distinctiveness, and towards an international world of islands, the encircling and distinct identity provided by the boundedness of land by water re-emerged in new guise: the festival provided additional means for performing and enacting Tasmania's notoriously parochial 'archipelagic communities'.

Spatial tensions appearing in the workings of *Ten Days on the Island* are complexly related to the strange transmutations of temporal ideas of progress. Especially insofar as the

eruption of the environmental dispute over forestry – ‘Whose island is it?’ – was a key moment of articulation between competing temporal and spatial assessments of Tasmanian progress and backwardness. For those who protested against the alignment of Forestry Tasmania and *Ten Days on the Island*, forestry was a marker of Tasmanian backwardness. In effect, as the forefront of environmental protest, many Tasmanian artists and writers had, over decades, set the scene for a cultural festival, like *Ten Days on the Island*, as a move away from Tasmania as a ‘backwards, old-Labor, red-necked’ island. Their art works and art practices were deeply invested in the morality of being on the right side of history. *The Rest of the World is Watching*, a statement by Greens parliamentarian Christine Milne and the title of a book (Flanagan and Pybus, 1990) outlining the first power-sharing Tasmanian parliament between the Tasmanian Greens and Labor in 1989, pointed towards the international imperative of the island leap-frogging modernity to find a new place in history as not only a leader in a world of islands, but a leader in the world of political ecology. In the preface to *The Rest of the World is Watching*, the influential North American environmentalist Paul Ehrlich (cited in Pybus and Flanagan, 1990: 9) endorsed that idea:

In 1989, Anne and I returned to Tasmania, one of our favourite global ‘backwaters’. But from the perspective of an environmental scientist, it was a backwater no more. Instead it had become a locus of one of the most hopeful political changes of this century – the emergence of Greens as a potent political force. What happened in Tasmania is, I hope, a harbinger of the political greening of the entire globe.

For Tasmanians who believed in a transmutation of backwardness through the island’s environmental politics, the saving of forests from development represented a different kind of development, a progress markedly at odds with the opinions of other Tasmanians that development was achieved by cutting trees down and turning them into woodchips.

What I saw in *Ten Days on the Island* were different articulations of Tasmania and Tasmanians, islands and islanders, momentarily drawn together and juxtaposed in the same place. What this reminded me of was the fifteenth and sixteenth century *isolario*, a precursor to the contemporary modern atlas that depicted diverse islands together. While the modern atlas was grounded in the requirements of the nation-state to survey and hence know its population as a totality, the *isolario* facilitated a topological movement amongst

entities prior to their assimilation into any overarching vision. *Ten Days on the Island* appeared as an ordering of islands premised on the same logic that seemed to underscore the *isolario*. The idea of a compendium of multiple islands in varied times and spaces also seemed a device for understanding the topological relations of islands and the ontological multiplicity of Tasmania's archipelagic islandness. Below I provide an account of the *isolario* as a distinctive type of spatial ordering, a material form of John Gillis' (2004) claim that islands may not only be thought *about*, but thought *through*.

(2) The early-modern *isolario*

One contention of this thesis is that there is no one original island, no island to which all others would be rendered derivative. Rather there is an archipelago of accumulated islands, an Aegean carved out of the archive of all possible islands, an infinite progression of islands to which the singularity of any individual island 'monad' (McMahon, 2003, 2010) may resonate. An earlier milieu had seen the invention of a cartographic genre dedicated to insular form: the *isolario*, literally 'atlas' or 'book of islands', was a style of spatial ordering popular in Italy and France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Designed as illustrated guides for marine travel through the Aegean archipelago and Levant, the earliest *isolario*, attributed to Cristoforo Buondelmonti, dates from 1420, while the last was produced by Vincenzo Coronelli in 1696, a period broadly understood as co-extensive with the beginnings of modernity.

In fusing together the practical requirements of navigation inherited from medieval portolano charts or 'pilot books' and an often fantastical "encyclopaedic compendia of knowledge derived from classical sources" (Turner, 1987: 11), *isolario* were popular for their descriptions of the characteristics and qualities of individual islands: "the presence of maps with the first-hand description of an area was a multimedia revolution" (Van Duzer, 2006: 150). Italian cartographer and miniaturist Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario* of 1528 expanded the geographic scope of the genre by including woodcuts depicting islands from not only the Mediterranean, but also from the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and East Asia. Bordone's island book even included a plan-view of the 'island-city' of 'Temistitan' (Mexico City) and a map of 'Ciampagu' "the earliest European-printed map of Japan" (Van Duzer, 2006: 151). While Bordone's *Isolario* illustrated islands "with relatively simple outlines, and only the

most summary topographical details”, the text accompanying the illustrations “follows a regular scheme in which he gives the names of the islands both ancient and modern, resources, customs, and famous deeds of the inhabitants, the geographic position, and the climate” (Armstrong, 1996: 81, 82).¹⁴³ In juxtaposing textual and diagrammatic knowledge derived from a mix of ancient, medieval and contemporary sources,¹⁴⁴ *isolario* constituted topological enactments of islandness, “the first attempt to express interrelationships, in the Aegean or, indeed, for islands anywhere” (Turner, 1987: 28).

For Conley (1996: 168) one effect of this novel cartographic genre’s emphasis on islands and their interrelations was to weaken and dilute “the cosmographic or universal view, shared by the analogical style and the world map”. In a move that echoed Ptolemy’s distinction between geography and chorography, instead of the divine completeness and coherence contained in the medieval *mappaemundi*, the graphic and figural ordering of the *isolario* embodied a spatial logic that ordered knowledge according to signs of detachment, deracination, fragmentation and atomisation (Conley, 1996). Quoting Conley, Roland Greene (2000: 141) contends that the *isolario*

has a critical project, namely the ‘digestion of a world that can never be completely explored or broken down into assimilable units’, making feasible a ‘modular thinking’ according to which ‘wholes and parts become coextensive, but endowed with an infinite possibility of difference’.

On this perspective, the *isolario* develops as a critical response to the “accumulating and totalising worldview of the imperial and economic centres” as the cartographic genre “depicts islands in autoreflexive terms, as self-regulating entities” (Greene, 2000: 141, 140).

Gillis (2004: 43) summarised the impact of the *isolario* on early modern thought as one whereby “one great macrocosm was replaced by many different microcosms”. However, the *isolario* is not only a microcosm of a larger whole. In positing a world knowable in

¹⁴³ In the preface to his *isolario*, Benedetto Bordone, in seeking copyright over his works, explains “that he worked day and night for many years in composing a book which treats all the islands of the world, both ancient and modern, with their ancient and modern denominations, sites, customs, stories, legends and other things related to them, situating them in their places in an orderly fashion” (cited in Armstrong, 1996: 91).

¹⁴⁴ Armstrong (1996: 82) notes among such sources those by Ptolemy, Strabo, Homer, Ovid, Pliny the Elder, Marco Polo, and Hernán Cortés.

terms of variation and difference the island book heralds a shift in the European geographical imaginary away from the originary and reflective totality of the *mappaemundi* ‘world mirror’, towards that marked by ‘subjective singularities’. Here myriad perspectives and a concomitant decentering of self resonate with wider trajectories of sovereignty, exploration and discovery, as much reflected in maritime adventures as the nascent beginnings of the self-governing subject. In particular, Conley (1996) has highlighted the consequences for the development of a nascent ethnography and anthropology linked to the forms of cartographic writing that the *isolario*, held in tension with earlier cosmographies,¹⁴⁵ makes possible. Knowledge is ordered as an “archipelago of things, places, and oddities” whose serial heterogeneity “allows various shapes of difference to be registered without yet being appropriated or allegorised” (Conley, 1996: 179, 169). The *isolario* provides a model for an ‘island logic’ whereby “insularity comes to stand for a kind of knowledge, a distinctively partial knowledge that counters the totalities of institutions and regimes” where “the givenness of the unitary, European-centered world ... has exploded into fragments”; “a way of thinking that is counterposed to worldmaking” (Greene, 2000: 138, 138, 139).

(3) A contemporary *isolario*

Whilst undertaking the fieldwork reported in Chapters 5 and 6 I was increasingly drawn to consider the *Ten Days on the Island* festival as a contemporary manifestation of the island logic of the early-modern *isolario*. In the first instance, the consistent scripting and visual design of the brochures that accompanied the 2001 and 2003 festivals is redolent of the *isolario*’s “tensions of space and figuration” (Conley, 1996: 3) (see for example Figures 5-11, 5-13, 5-17 and 5-18). Each artistic event is represented as emblematic of an island culture, an authentic alliance of people and place. To turn the pages of these glossy maps of each festival is to be both navigated pragmatically through the here and now of each *Ten Days on the Island* and to be carefully conducted on a world tour of island cultures; on, as noted in Chapter 5, a ‘motionless voyage in place’. Given that these island cultures are represented as bearing the hallmark of fixed and describable island spatialities, this is simultaneously a tour of world islands adventured from within the Tasmanian

¹⁴⁵ For example, Rob Shields (2006: 147) has noted that Ptolemy’s “concepts of latitude and longitude were related in part to an interest in defining *Klimata* – ecologico-ethnological characteristics of regions”.

archipelago. The Euclidian logic of the modern atlas is present in systematic recording of islands in terms of area and geographical position alongside data about population size. Later festival brochures continue and extend this arch-modern ordering of islands. The 2005 *Ten Days on the Island* brochure classifies islands according to “three main types” – continental, river and volcanic (a schema broadly similar to that proposed by the first European to circumnavigate and map Tasmania, Matthew Flinders ([1814] 2000), who worked up his island observations while imprisoned by the French on Mauritius). Tasmania is represented in the brochure as a both a singular continental island and an archipelago of mini-continental islands. The relation of islands to other islands is underscored by graphical depictions which position Tasmania within a world map of islands (Figure 7-1).

As in earlier festival brochures, the characteristically modernist flattening of island diversity through subordination to universal referents is juxtaposed with the exuberance and particularity of artistic expression embedded in the landscape of place (see left side and accompanying inset panels of Figure 7-1). It is not topographical maps of islands drawn with the heaven-borne, detached clarity of Sicilian-born Archimedes that populate the maps given to potential *Ten Days on the Island* audiences. The maps on offer are more closely aligned with medieval maps in their multi-perspectival agglomerations of dynamic human bodies, cultural artefacts, fragments of landscapes and ill-defined but evocative forms. The composition in Figure 7-2 from *Treasured Island* presents an ensemble of miniature naked bodies, an enormous echoing shell that synaesthetically references the sounds and smell of the ocean, a bleached marsupial skull, a eucalyptus leaf and twig of native Tasmanian flowers, and some dirt-earth, all contained within the individual compartments of what might be either a Japanese Bento box or the slide draw of a European museum archival cabinet. Or an *isolario*.



Figure 7-2 *Treasured Island*
(TDOTI, 2001a: 15)

Individual pages assert the essential uniqueness and diversity of island cultures in their material fragments. As a highly deliberate and ordered collection, however, these

brochures affirm an implicit logic of familial island solidarity and of a shared struggle to emerge from the margins of modernity to futures beyond, amongst and prior to modernity.

The *isolario* was not only a precursor for the modern atlas and the encyclopaedia. In its foregrounding of ethnographic description it also provided a model for the nascent travel novel that accompanied 'grand tours' of Europe popular from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries (Conley, 1996). More than the brochures itself, the experience of participating within the festival, of moving within the island of Tasmania on a journey of worldly island discovery was redolent of the *isolario*'s magical capacity to render islandness at once gargantuan and Lilliputian through compaction, chiasmatic reversal and juxtaposition. Like the early-modern *isolario*, the festivals' diverse configurations of modernity work through detachment, deracination, fragmentation and atomisation, even while it is motivated by a governmental dream to re-organise the world of Tasmanians as attached, indigenous, coherent and alike (other islanders). Again, the cabinet of curiosities in Figure 7-2 is emblematic of the dual project of both indigenising and deracinating fragments of islandness. To shift from one form of artistic expression of island experience to another; to shift from one island culture to another; to shift within the internal archipelago of Tasmanian society: these were the performative logics deployed to create a highly compressed and temporally circumscribed encounter with the singularity and distinctiveness of Tasmanian islandness. The resultant tension of artistic excess and governmental prescription, of local introspection and touristic extroversion, of boundedness and freedom constituted islandness as a centripetal dynamic in the first festival. In its staging of a nascent ethnography, the *isolario* of the first festival engaged Tasmanians as islanders in a celebration of their distinctive island culture and their place within an exotic and far from marginal world of islands. In this sense, the performance of islandness in the first festival served to subsume regional variety and political divisions within an affirmation of Tasmanian singularity. Yet, the dense crush of interests and dreams brought together in the first festival then exploded outwards in the second as the centrifugal dynamic of the *isolario* asserted itself over governmental ambitions of island order. Just as the events of the festival represented a transient alignment of irreconcilable difference, so too the alignment of Tasmanians evident in the first festival smoothly fragmented around the second festival, constituting islandness as intransigent political

conflict. The ethnographic celebration of islandness in the first festival turned to critical self-reflection in the second festival as Tasmanian islanders asserted their primal claims to speak for the island. Premier Bacon himself unwittingly hinted at such a possibility in the first festival when he responded to the environmental concerns of artists by suggesting that only naivety could excuse surprise at the intensifying and amplifying effects of islandness.

The *Ten Days on the Island isolario* offers a particularly vivid performance of Tasmania's island multiplicity. Yet, the dreams and realities that swirled around the first two festivals were uncannily familiar to this Tasmanian. Although *Ten Days on the Island* crammed the world into Tasmania at the same moment as projecting Tasmania into the world, the result seemed neither cosmopolitan nor provincial, but recognisably Tasmanian in its incoherence and impossibility. Through my empirical investigation of the festival, I was given access, albeit incomplete and fleeting, to the *isolario* that is Tasmania itself: to the universe of Tasmanian life that projects both backwards and forwards through millennia and that spans a multitude of Earthly places. Lying within the tightly compressed horizons of the festival, this compendium of possible Tasmanias both invites and resists unifying logics. The political challenge made manifest through the festival is not that of continuing to search for the universal principle – of modernity, nature, history, or culture – that will cement Tasmanian society once and for all in a fixed, singular Tasmanian islandness.

Through events like the *Ten Days on the Island*, Tasmanians are increasingly called on to ethnographically reflect on themselves as islanders, as bearers of a distinctive culture anchored in a distinctive place. The *isolario* provides a means of not only understanding the empirical enactments of islandness in *Ten Days on the Island*, but it also offers a means to understand the constitutions of Tasmanian islandness more generally as characterised by material multiplicities, divergences, messy entanglements, and complex becomings. *Ten Days on the Island* enacts all sorts of tangled and hybrid forms of Tasmania, and none are reducible to a singular governmental entity. Multiple peoples, practices and places are enrolled in the political constitution of Tasmanian islandness and their varied enactments of culture and art highlight the ways in which governmental projects can never fully encompass the object they imagine. Indeed, the 'Tasmanian Problem' is not a problem of Tasmania or Tasmanians; it is a problem of governmental ambition. The challenge posed

by Tasmanian islandness is the challenge of the *isolario*, the challenge of what Isabelle Stengers (2002) calls 'cosmopolitics'. It is the challenge of putting the world together with 'due process' (Latour, 2004), without assuming that the world is given.

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Appendix



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
School of Geography & Environmental Studies

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of investigation

Island rhetoric in the geo-social, geo-economic and geo-political structuring of Tasmania: analysis of *Ten Days on the Island* international arts festival

Name of chief investigator and researcher

Chief Investigator Dr Elaine Stratford
Researcher Andrew Harwood

Purpose of the study

The aim of this research is to examine issues of island culture, economy and governance present in the *Ten Days on the Island* international arts festival. This study is being undertaken as part of a Higher Research Degree (PhD) in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania.

Criteria for inclusion or exclusion

The reason why you have been selected for inclusion in this research project is that you fall into one or more of the following sample populations:

1. Relevant agency personnel
2. Elected representatives
3. Organisers
4. Performers and artists
5. Audiences

There are no criteria (for example due to age, sex or health) for excluding anybody from participating in this research.

Study procedures

If you agree to be involved in this research you will be asked to answer a number of questions relating to the *Ten Days on the Island* international arts festival. With your permission this interview will be recorded. Below are some generic questions that you might like to consider between now and the interview:

- What is it that makes Tasmania an island?
- What is important about Tasmania's geographical status as an island?
- What are the most significant issues currently affecting Tasmania?
- How does Tasmania's 'islandness' relate to these issues?
- What is the experience of living on an island?
- How would you compare Tasmania to other islands?
- What has been your or your agency's involvement with *Ten Days on the Island*?
- What is important about using the trope of island as the organising principle for *Ten Days on the Island*?

- How has the festival changed since the first one in 2001?
- Have the festivals changed your understanding of Tasmania?

Possible risks or discomforts

There are no anticipated physical, psychological or legal risks arising from your involvement with this research project. However, you may initially feel some minor discomfort due to being questioned by someone that you do not know very well. This is quite normal, and as there are no wrong (or right!) answers, this feeling should pass as the interview develops. It is most unlikely that any of the questions you are asked will be of a personal nature, be socially distressing or harmful, or relate to commercially confidential information. However if you do not wish to answer a question you are under no obligation to do so, indeed you can terminate the interview at any time without giving a reason.

Confidentiality

In order to ensure that the information provided by participants is maintained as confidential a number of steps will be taken. These include:

- No one other than the Researcher and the Chief Investigator will have access to recorded interviews or notes taken during interviews.
- All information will be stored off mainframe computer networks.
- Transcribed interviews will not be divulged to any commercial organisation or government department.
- Unless permission is sought from you, the future presentation of information deriving from the research project will not identify you as a subject.

Freedom to refuse or withdraw

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. As previously stated, you may withdraw from the study at any time. No reason need be given for your withdrawal.

Contact persons

If you require more information on any aspects of this study, or would like to contribute something further, you are encouraged to contact either Chief Investigator Dr Elaine Stratford or Doctoral candidate Andrew Harwood. Contact details are given below.

Elaine Stratford	Andrew Harwood
(03) 6226 2642	(03) 6226 2833
Elaine.Stratford@utas.edu.au	Andrew.Harwood@utas.edu.au

Or write to:

Andrew Harwood
School of Geography and Environmental Studies
Private Bag 78, University of Tasmania
Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Concerns or complaints

If you have any ethical concerns about this study, or complaints about the manner in which the study was conducted you should contact the Chair or Executive Officer of the University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Chair of the Southern Tasmania HREC is A/Prof Gino DalPont, and the Executive Officer is Ms Amanda McAully, phone (03) 6226 2763.

Statement regarding approval

This research project has received ethical approval from the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee.

Results of investigation

Since this study is part of a Research Higher Degree (PhD), results of this investigation may not be available for some time. However, in the event that preliminary results are published, you can choose to be informed about these publications by providing your contact details to the researcher, Andrew Harwood.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Island rhetoric in the geo-political, geo-economic and geo-social structuring of Tasmania: analysis of *Ten Days on the Island* international arts festival.

Participant's Statement:

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves conversational semi-structured interviews.
4. I understand that risks are minimal and are likely to be confined to minor social discomfort.
5. I understand that all research data will be treated as confidential.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject unless I give permission for my opinions or statements to be attributed to me. If so sign here:
8. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any prejudice.

Name of subject

Signature of subject Date

Researcher's Statement

9. I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator Andrew Harwood

Signature of investigator Date
